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UNDER THE ROSE

Koona

„Niemand beichtet gern in Presa;
Doch vertraun wir oft sub Rosa
In der Musen stillem Hain.„

Goethe.

UNDER THE ROSE

POEMS WRITTEN CHIEFLY

IN INDIA

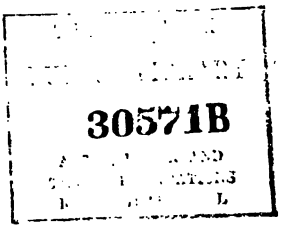
BY H. G. KEENE.

LONDON:

BELL AND DALDY, YORK STREET,

COVENT GARDEN.

1868.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TO BARRY CORNWALL.

" O man his inner nature shows
Willingly on the paths of prose,
Yet oft the secret is betrayed
In the Muses' silent shade—
Under the Rose."

So lonely Goethe. I who have found
Among my fellows humbler ground,
Still love to trifle truant hours
Where dies beneath those magic bowers
Each earthly sound.

O Father of our modern lyre,
You know the pulse such hours inspire,
Accept these songs, though poor and slight,
And judge them not by your clear light,
But my desire.

CONTENTS.

	Page
MICHAEL DE MAS	1
The Twins	28
Perhaps	58
Sowing the Wind	63
Worship	66
St. John's in the Wilderness	67
Hereafter	70
A Dream at Sebastopol	72
Morning	74
Home	74
Regret	76

SONNETS:—

The Dying Wife	78
True Love	79
To a Lady in Dejection	80
To Time	81
Sarah and Hagar	82
Colonisation. I.	83
Colonisation. II.	84
Farewell to H. W. S. on leaving England	85
East and West	86
Nightfall	87

		Page
Nocturn		88
The Rosebud		89
A Message		90
To a Friend		91
To A. S.		92

DAY-DREAMS: —

I.	To * * * * *	94
II.	"Where summer is, there 'tis fresh and fair"	101
III.	"Stand by the ocean"	104
IV.	To * * * *	105
V.	"Where are fled the breezy summers"	107
VI.	The Burden of the Wilderness	111
VII.	"The world grows old, her beauty fadeth fast"	112

THE WANDERER: —

	Introductory	114
I.	Proem	115
II.	A Voice	115
III.	The Path	116
IV.	Setting Out	117
V.	The Same	118
VI.	The Hyphen	120
VII.	Ἀγνῳστῳ Θεῳ	122
VIII.	Ad Sodales	124
IX.	Resignation	126
X.	Peace	128

	Page
The Tomb of the Suttee	131
Indian Domestic Idyll	134
Clive's Dream	137
The Flowers' Revenge	143
The Cradle	148
The Partition of the Earth	150
Ballad	152
The Bridegroom	153
Hoc erat in Votis	155
The Day-spring	156

Some of these Poems have appeared already in "Blackwood" and other Magazines, or in a volume published in 1854. *The rest are new.*

MICHAEL DE MAS,

THE GOLD-FINDER.

" This fell whore of thine
Hath in her more destruction than thy sword,
For all her cherubin look."

TIMON OF ATHENS.

I.

TO travellers on the seas, or desolate lands,
The distant objects on the horizon's verge
Show but their highest summits; so with Time.
Time orbs so silently beneath our feet,
We look around, and know not that we move,
Or that the point whereon we stand to-day,
This moment, is our culminating point.
The past and future dip as they recede,

And only give to view the tops of things;
Therefore, be happy now. The mental eye
May take its pleasure, pleasure if it be,
In gazing on the cottage or the church ;
The heart may fondly dwell upon the one,
As the sweet shrine of late remembered prayer,
And on the other, till the breath of home
Waft to the soul more pleasant memories
Than the West breathing o'er a field of hay.
Blest in our ignorance, we cannot see
That, underneath the rose-grown eaves of home,
Lurk fire and sickness, bickering and want ;
Or, where the steeple-cross shines in the sun,
That damp cold graves are nestling dark beneath.
All nature cries—" Be happy now." The bee,
Whose angry labours wound the ear of noon,
Finds in the winter, from his garnered store,
Quick spoliation and a bitter death ;
The light-winged butterfly, with truer scope,
Ranges all summer through the garden beds,
And, ignorant of darker days to come,
Enjoys a life-long holiday ; the Man
Who spake as never man did, bade us view
The untended lilies of the desert-plain :

" They toil not," said He, " neither do they spin ;
And yet I say to you that Solomon,
In all his glory, was not clad like these."
O dreamer, stretched beneath the pleasant boughs,
Watching the foamy eddies of the brook,
How dull the fair hour mirrored in your eye
If Hope have hung her promise in the clouds !
And yet he showed himself no homesick swain,
Such as, amid the perils of the strife,
The conflict of existence, pine and sigh
To flee to some ideal resting-place,
To feed on contemplation, or to woo
Some simple Thestylis in beechen groves.
For combat was his element, and a foe
Gave joys to him no friend could ever yield,—
Foe vanquished or contending; hopeless prayer
Rang like a trumpet of encouragement;
And brave resistance did but seem to him
Another step that led him to the heights.
Michael had left his boyhood's school, cast forth
For deeds of lawless violence, and returned
Back to a ruined father's ruined home,
To feed his heart on innutritious dreams,
And idle scorn of those he would not know.

Thus, though the hues of English autumn-time,
Clear, vigorous, spirit-cheering, morning tints,
Were dancing on a thousand thousand trees,
Were streaming on a thousand fertile fields,
And smoking on a hundred cottage-tops,
He felt that these, once his, were his no more:
A stranger ploughed his very garden-plots—
The halls, where his forefathers fed the shire,
Were fallen, and all the stones and timbers sold.
Only one cottage, and the hundredth part
Of the broad lands, and how much less part still
Of the respect and power that graced the name,
Would cleave to him the heir. So slow had been
The gradual alienation, that till now
He had not felt it fully; but that morn
The devil had seized him in the house of God;
For even in the very church, where once
The service stayed for them, and bells rang on
Till good Sir Marmaduke, in coach of state
Drawn by six solemn Flanders steeds, and girt
By a full score of stalwart serving-men,
Approaching, gave the signal to begin—
Even there a London scrivener, with his brood
Of pale and purse-proud children of the fog,

Sate in their ancient place, beneath the crest
Which Black Lord Walter wore at Agincourt;
And over the cold stones, where lies at peace
The knight who fell at Naseby, by his king,
There sate his steward's grandson.
"Ah," thought Michael,
"The desolate abomination stands
Most proudly where it ought not; 'tis not these
I blame, but gold, the cursèd cause of all—
Gold that o'erthrew my fathers, and raised these:
These—and why not me also?" till he swore
That gold, and gold alone, should be his god,
As who alone rewards its worshippers.
"Therefore," he said, "dear idol, I to thee
From henceforth pay my vows: thou who dost raise
The beggar, till the princes of the earth
Bow low to kiss his stirrup; who dost give
Power and high station, virtue and renown.
My name shall be among the fortunate,
For I am of those whose will is destiny.
And then, perhaps, when victory shall be mine,
My Margaret will not turn away from me,
As now, methinks, even she must wish to do."
Was no one by to warn that lonely boy,

Whose eager thought dwelt thus upon the morrow?
Did no prophetic shudder follow hard
On those wild words? Did Mammon win unchecked
That undefended heart, and guide his hand?
Nay, there was manhood in the impulse yet,
While in the inspiration of those thoughts
He wrote to one, their noble house's chief,
Whose voice was heard at Eastern council-boards;
And with the ardour of a youthful heart
He urged his claim: "His lordship knew him well,
The soldier's spirit he felt; for he was strong,
The influence of wind, or sun, or rain
Could never sap his sinews; were it his
To draw a sword in yonder golden land,
He joined their ranks no niggard of himself—
Nor slothful wearer of a scarlet coat,
And fatal but to women."
Marvel not
That Michael took the final step alone:
His mother never knew a wish but his;
His father,—ah! the sorrows of decay,
And sorrow-taught indulgence, made him cold,
Cold as the inmate of an idiot's cell.

II.

Ten years had shed their various gifts on earth,
Of death and life, of sunshine and of shade;
Michael had gained his end, and India's sun
Now ruled his eager blood: some of his hopes
Were crowned with triumph;—he got store of gold,
But lost his sense of honour.
In days like those,
Deceit and violence gave the rule of life
To men once wise and generous. They were poor,
And they had power: opinion, far away,
Raved like the idle murmurs of the sea,
Heard in still summer evenings from a hill.
Blame them not over harshly; skill and valour
Give force which, even when marred and mixed
with wrong,
May bless those who abide its visitings.
When autumn nights are moonless, and thick clouds
Have hid the friendly faces of the stars,
The storm may bring keen lightnings: here and
there
Some wretch, whose hour has come, may gain by
them
Immunity from other lingering deaths,

And that may seem an evil; yet the air,
Purged by those very bolts, grows sweet and clear,
And feeds the corn, the oil, the drouthy vine,
And gives to men, for many an affluent day,
Prosperity and pleasure. So with these,
God's chosen messengers to work His will;
They purify the poisoned moral gale,
Cause peace and plenty wheresoe'er they go,
And lead in happiness on a path of thorns.
Among the foes of the English settlers, one
Was ever foremost: he—by what arts won
Needs not to trace—had made a friend of Michael,
Who grew in strength and riches day by day.
But purer times must come; strange words were spoke,
Most just, though Michael scarce had looked for such
From those chill-blooded partners of his fault.
Surmise grew into knowledge, Michael's friends
Were few; men stained as deep, pronounced his doom.
Still there was hope—he never knew despair:
The rajah he had served should shelter him,
And he would lead his armies; he foresaw
More wealth, more power, more means of growing great.

III.

He passed from low Bengal's unbroken green—
That, like a harlot, smiles but to betray—
And, with a troop of chosen cavaliers,
Came to the holy land of Hindostan;
Wearily wandering, whether the strong sun
Parched the wide champaign, and the furnace-blasts
Came howling, hot and dry, whirling the sand
In dense and overwhelming canopy,
So that for hours the dark was palpable;
Or whether, under the moist star of eve,
The village seemed to slumber—girt with trees,
Intensely still, and immemorial pools
Silently shining, save where, now and then,
The alligator glided from the bank,
Warned by the chill of evening, or the girls
With tinkling bangles, and the ringing laugh
Of youth, and happiness, and unrestraint,
In coming down for water, scared away
The timid monster of two elements.

Once, as they halted in an ancient grove,
Set by some hospitable hand of old,
And consecrate to travellers, now too near
The fortress of a wild Mahratta chief,

The weary band were throwing by their arms,
And, gathered in their separate brotherhoods,
Prepared for evening's rest; some made in earth
Their simple ovens—some set up the tents—
Some slew the bleating kid—some, kneeling, turned
Their faces to the west, their Prophet's shrine,
And, with much prostrate bending, prayed to Him
Who made the morning and the eventide.
  Suddenly came upon them, unawares,
The soldiers of the castle, bound their arms,
And drove them harshly o'er the plain on foot,
Weary and terror-stricken, through the gate,
Into the presence-hall, where sate their chief.
Sternly he questioned Michael of his wealth,
And with what hope he, from a foreign land,
Was wandering thus attended; who, in scorn,
Answered him nothing; till, "Away with him!
Bind him there on the house-top, that the moon
Shed curses on his face, pale as her own,
And our strong sun burn up his alien blood,
And—search his tents, and bring me all his gold."
  They laid him on a low unfurnished couch,
And left him bound alone; he could but look
Up to the sky, his head so fast was set;

And so he lay and strove to rest himself—
But vainly: the sharp cords entered his flesh;
The dews sank on his shuddering skin; the moon
Rose like a fire among the mango boughs,
And slowly wending on her westward way,
Smote him with deadly influence; jackals yelled
Like souls in torment, and the keen-faced stars
Glared like sins unrepented; so night passed—
A night as long as three—the chilly dawn
Came, grey, and weakly struggling with the moon,
Then threw a red flush over all the east,
Whereat the moon turned white and hid herself,
While the great orb that is her lord arose,
And swiftly mounted high. His pain increased,
His body streamed, his brain was agonized,
His sense was reeling; suddenly there came
A tingling stillness on his ears; his eyes
Closed, and he scarcely knew of one who said,
"Let be; unbind him; 'tis a warrior good."

Long days the fever lasted, but his strength,
Nursed by the breezes of a hardier clime,
Would not desert him, so that he arose
A bold, refreshed young giant; then the chief
Spoke soothing words, and Michael hid his wrath,

And answered calmly; till they made their peace.
And Michael gave the service of his skill
To tame those wild Mahrattas, ruling them
To discipline, that they might grow more fierce,
Like dogs, that wreak on foe their masters' will.

IV.

Time held his course; the strong-willed man of blood
Prospered in all he undertook, and throve,
And gathered stores, and seemed to casual eyes
A happy child of fortune: yet there burned
Two unextinguished furnaces of woe
Within him—lust of gold, and of revenge:
For his was not a spirit that could forget,
Or let new kindness swallow ancient wrongs.
And therefore watched he, many days and years,
How he might compass his employer's ruin,
And yet not risk his fortunes; the last spark
Of holier fire, his love for that fair girl—
That cottage-flower of purity and truth,
Margaret, the sister of his boyhood's friend—
That spark still smouldered in some inmost nook
Of his sin-darkened bosom; for the fumes

Of thought debased rose ever, like a smoke,
Dimming the smiles of nature: the carouse,
The fierce extremes of dalliance and of blood,
Had almost made him something less than man.
At length came round the time he waited for;
The fraud and rapine of the prince he served
Rose to such height as seemed, to the English chiefs,
A source of fear, if not at once abridged;
And thereupon they issued words of war.
Full long the Hindoo treated, hoping still,
By terms, to pacify the alien power,
Which even then was growing terrible;
But each concession, made a day too late,
Drew forth fresh claims of power, and land, and gold;
For, in those days, the glamour of the East
Had not yet vanished: Like the peasant-boy,
Who deems that London streets are paved with gold,
Men, old in all the arts of peace and war,
Dreamed that a land whose poverty they saw
Might harbour still the treasures of romance.
At last, grown desperate, he stood at bay,
And, hoping that the neighbouring potentates,
(Whose crooked policy still left in doubt

Which side they meant to favour), when they saw
Their countryman but once victorious,
Would join to drive the usurper to the sea,
Resolved to stand the hazard of a fight.

v.

The season was the later Indian rains;
The sorrowing sky, bereavèd of her lord,
Was dark and full of weeping, and the heart
Of Michael, though a bold one, had been trained,
In its cold native island, to adore
All the bright beams of summer; and the sun,
Even when it dealt destruction, gave him joy.
And now he drooped, and felt an inward dread,
Such as the priests of old Jerusalem
Felt, when they heard the sighing gusts that swept
From the dark shrine to the gate Beautiful,
Upon the fatal night before the storm,
When the Shechinah left them audibly.
Long mused he, while the chill damp night came on,
And starting, after dark, trooped with sad thoughts,
Felt fear and wonder that he was alone.
Around his tent he heard the mighty waters

Descend on earth like some prolonged cascade;
Within, the congregated insect life
Monotonously hummed: he made two turns,
Then, calling for his torch, took an old book,
Brass-bound and weather-wasted, the last gift
Of a dear mother, given to him with sobs
And murmured blessings, when he left his home.
He opened it, and face to face arose
The dead old years he thought to have escaped
All chronicled in letters: there he saw
Answers to some of his, containing doubts
Long since become negations; some again
Encouraging resolves of his, long broke,
And, as he thought, forgotten;—not a leaf
But marked some downward step. Oh! in our life
There are no hours so full of speechless woe
As those in which we read, through misty eyes,
Letters from those who loved us once; of whom
Some have ceased to love at all—the hand
That traced the fond warm records still and cold—
The spirit that turned to ours, long lost to all
That moves, and mourns, and sins upon the earth;
And some, ah! sadder that, by us estranged,
Still live, still love, but live for us no more.

One wrote: "But thou! remember in thy youth
Thy Great Creator, ere the evil days
Make recollection agony and despair;
And, if I dare to join a lower thought,
Remember thy forefathers: their stern souls
Would see no glory in a home rebuilt
By any help but honour's. Low they lie,
And though at night the moonlight comes and creeps
From tomb to tomb with silent messages,
Haply they care not for us; if they care,
They must be as they were;—no change of death
Can make the brave insensible to shame."

And one, again, tracing more delicate lines:—
"What tears shall wash thy name bright? O, to me,
Dear in humiliation; dear in hope;
Dear without hope; dear even in disgrace;
For I am faithful, faithful to the end!"

He sate and gazed, till through the tent was heard
That sound the coldest cannot hear unmoved,
The strong spasmodic weeping of a man.
And all that night in Michael's tent there burned,
Though foul with smoke, and swayed by gusty winds,
A strong bright torch, fit emblem of his soul,

That keen lamp of God's light'ning bright and
strong;
While, looking on a tress of golden hair
That lay before him, all night long he read.
This was the man who left, in days gone by,
A friend, and a friend's sister, dear as he;
A most kind mother, sinking with her cares;
An apathetic father, worn with woe;
A home in ruins, and a noble name
To be renewed or ended by himself.

VI.

All things had now combined; they were to
march
Against the English army; thoughts long nursed
Had taken form, to ripen into deeds.
The rains were ended, and the army met
In an old city, where he marshalled them;
And, as he walked at evening on the terrace
Of the high castle where his dwelling was,
He looked through fretted arches to the plain,
And saw their tents dropped white and countless
there—
Like sheep without a shepherd—like poor sheep

Marked for the slaughter, and he pitied them.
Ere long, the dying despot of the day
Sank softly down, drowned in a sea of blood—
Like the old Roman wolf in Capreæ;
Michael prepared for action: dark night fell,
The tents were lost to sight, the shouting sank,
The drums were silent, all the plain was dark;
Only against the far horizon loomed
The uneven outline of the distant hills.
He called his trusty troopers, and stole forth,
Hoping to pass the camp all unobserved;
But with that host was one who loved him not,
His own lieutenant, nephew to the chief,
And higher in the soldiers' hearts than he.
This man had dogged his path for many a day;
And when they came to the town's outer gate,
They found it strictly guarded. Michael glared
An instant at the densest, shouting loud—
"Smite, smite them—spare not—each man for his life!"
His Arab horse, that stood with gathered limbs,
And head reined to his chest, sprang at the cry,
And leaping, like a flame, plunged in the crowd;
The rest was one confusion, without sight

Or sound—a breathless dream of ecstasy—
Till he, and half a hundred mounted men,
Were pouring o'er the plain at frantic speed;
As, when the banks of some great stream are burst,
The long pent water floods the lower fields.
On came the fierce lieutenant, and behind
Clattered a motley rabble, whose lean steeds
Could ill sustain that violent career;
And soon there were not left, who followed him,
Five hundred horsemen; still the chase was hot—
Hot was the chase, and long—o'er scorchèd sands
And open cornfields, till the spent Suwárs
Began to drop behind: or, rolled on earth,
Saw their girths broken, or their horses slain.
Then Michael's men drew bridle and stood still,
Waiting thè onset of the exhausted crew,
Whose numbers now were scarce the double of theirs.
First came the fierce Foujdar—"Forward!" he cried;
"Down with the treacherous Frank!" his latest word;
A pistol-flash, a groan, a drop of blood
On the white drapery he wore—his horse

Was riderless for ever. Michael turned
Fierce on the cowed pursuers—"Get you back
And tell your master he is now to pay
My long-held forfeit for foul injuries,
Who dared to fling on me, when I was weak,
The childish insults of a childish mind."
That night he was within the British lines,
But his dear gold was gone; for at the gate
His waggon-bullocks and their drivers slain,
And half his guard cut off, he had but saved
His life alone, and some few jewels, stored
Upon his person. Once more all his toil,
His guilt, was foiled—he was a beggar still.

VII.

His ill-gained wealth was gone, but not his heart;
And gain it seemed to that impatient spirit
That now he should not go, a man disgraced,
To build his fallen ancestral home, long bare
To the invading scorn of low-born men.
He would sail eastward with what yet remained,
Touch at some island of the tropic seas,
And take a freight of spices; thence set sail
For the rich ports of China, there to trade,

And see the wonders of that unknown land;
Thence o'er the broad Pacific, and so down
By Panama and Valparaiso, home
By the cold Land of Fire. Thus would he voyage
And gain more wealth, and win himself a name
For riches and adventure, courage high,
And knowledge of strange countries; then no more
Would cleave to him the brand of his disgrace.
All bow the knee to him whom fortune serves,
And he would be her master; he would rise
Higher and brighter o'er the heads of men,
Blaze in their sight, no meteor short-lived, vain,
But rule them like the day-god; then to him
The senate and the court should open their gates,
The mammon-loving city name his name,
His old ancestral mansion rear her tops;
And he would dwell at ease, for all abroad
He should behold the lands his fathers held,
And breathe again his genial native air;
Nature and he should both renew their youth,
And all things have a beauty not their own.
There, on the upland, shall a milder sun
Smite the white cottage and the glistening vane,
And nestle in the balmy stack, and float,

A fruitful flood, upon the southern wall;
There the great oak shall stir his solemn head,
The lime-tree shed her blossoms, sweetly faint,
The poplar tremble, like the heart of man,
Whose darkest thoughts have under-lights of hope;
The beech shall spread his venerable shade,
The stately elms' procession guard the walks,
The birch-bark gleam through foliage, and the ash
Wave ruddy clusters; willows there shall weep,
And the wet alder shall delight to wade
Knee-deep in sluggish waters, where the kine
Take the whole meadow with contented eye,
Philosophers of nature.
One dark thought
Alone can mar these visions: He must die,
And leave the dear possessions;—in this land,
Where men are struck down in their hours of strength,
That thought will oft intrude;—by day it flies
Before the excitement that his life affords—
The chase, the goblet, and the battle-field;
In sleep it haunts him. Once he dreamed a dream:
Fifty unspeakable ones had borne his soul
(For he was dead), with sounds of writhing laughter,

Into a sideless, roofless, bottomless place,
And left him there alone: there was no pain,
But a sense that all was lost for evermore;
That this was now, and this should ever be,
Made the stagnation misery; till, behold,
The sad and silent years wore on; at length
His musing spirit said within herself—
" O for one breath of life! a day, an hour,
Before the irrevocable change! How great
My power was, had I used it! now 'tis gone.
Where is my wealth?—a heap of rotten leaves,
Blown to the shores of folly, where it grew;
My cherished body gone, perchance for ever,
Perhaps reserved to torment." With the thought,
He strove to utter such a cry, as, heard
Echoing beyond the hollow halls of hell,
Upon the confines of the orbèd earth,
Might warn the guilty ere it was too late.
And with that cry he woke: the dawning day
Saw him confused with horror; when it set
He was carousing to the lips in sin.

Now was no hope! unless some joys of home
Might give him pause, and win him from his sins—
Sins not now pleasant; but so strong of growth,

That, like old ivy, they had hid the tree,
And threatened its destruction.
There was one
(Although he dared not name her) who had been
A cottage light, still seen, though far away,
In the dark, stormy wilderness of life;
Her love should win him yet; for he had heard
That she was still unwedded; and he knew
Her woman's heart, in blessèd confidence,
Might still be true to that which he had been.

VIII.

He sailed, in search of wealth, from Ganges' mouth,
But the ship's prow was never seen again,
Stemming the homeward waters;—whether whelmed
In stormy ocean, half-way down she swayed,
And swung among the dolphins and the sharks;
Or whether, on some calm Pacific night,
Where, on the farthest limits of the dark,
There rose and fell the momentary flash
Of lone inland volcanoes, some soft breeze
Had run her slowly on the coral reefs,
And the blue waves had rippled o'er her grave.

There was a nine days' wonder; men inquired,
"Where was the man whose wealth, without an heir,
(So lost, so wonderfully won again,
But after his departure, by the faith
Of an old servant thought to have been slain),
Was fabulously splendid?" And some said,
"There was a will; all he might have was left
To strangers"—"to a lady he had loved."

It was the year that filled the century
From Michael's birth, when he was seen again.

A venturous band had wandered in the west,
Till, far from towns or any haunt of men,
They came upon a region by the sea.
Rock-bound and bare it lay, and all the storms
That hurl the ancient, white-topped weary waves
On California since the world began,
Had, day by day, and year by untold year,
Heaped all their violence on its patient side,
And wasted it unhindered; such salt herbs,
Such dwarf and barren trees as the keen air
Gave sufferance to, but rendered still more grim
The stony desolation of the place.

Yet was that soil not barren, or the men
Had never sought its distant boundaries;

For they were of the eager sea-king race,
And e'en their rude and weather-wasted garb
Bore mark of civilised life: "No foot of man,"
Said one, "has trode these wastes from everlasting;
Brothers, the land is virgin, part we here,
And in the evening let us meet again,
There, by the mouth of yonder natural cave,
And share the general labours of the day.
See, Edward, even now you tripped on gold."
They parted; in the evening, when they met,
Their leader wore a sad and solemn look,
And with few words he led them up the rocks,
Into a stern wild scene: far as they looked,
Cliff heaped on cliff, and stone on fragment stone,
The land's brown ribs extended; here and there
Steep chasms it had, declining to the sea;—
Some were the beds of streams, that evermore
Washed down the golden grain, and in a year
Paid to the treasury of the insatiate flood
More than the subjects of the richest kings
Yield to their despots in a century;
But some of them were dry, and choked with stones
And logs of rotting timber, and deep sand:
Here, with the lumps of ore heaped high around,

They found a human skeleton ; hard by,
A rusty cutlass, such as mariners use,
Whereon were rudely graven, and half-effaced,
The words, " Michael de Mas," and underneath,
" I die of want upon a bed of gold."

THE TWINS.

A ROSICRUCIAN MYSTERY.

WERE they all false, those dreams of intercourse
With immaterial creatures? Can it be
That, as the world has grown in vulgar skill
And the cold arts that minister to clay,
It has lost that more rare and precious gift—
That second vision, high and holy lore,
Born in Arabia, nursed in moody Spain,
And made complete in mystic Germany?
Believe it not, let no man dare to think
The human soul, a little lower than angels,
Should not have mastery, when purged and pure,
Over the agencies of lesser spirits.

Part the First.

I.

The war-spent world was hushed in grim repose,
For mighty Charles, the irrespective scourge
Of Christian king and Moorish conqueror,
Had hid his pride in mock humility,
And edified disinterested monks
By shedding tears at his own obsequies;
And bombast Paracelsus, with his tales
Of 'life's elixir," and the "stone o' the sun,"
Had led the world in willing wonderment;
But, if the adept was mad with drink, or if
The element spirits were indeed his slaves,
Was what perhaps the devil alone could tell:
Mortals but knew he had vexed them and was dead.
There dwelt a man at Frankfort in that day,
Rich, and of good repute, a gentleman
As gentle in his virtue as his race—
Albrecht von Riesenheim his native name,
Titanoides in the learned world,
For he was an Hermetic, and the spirits
Of all the elements served him, and the book
Of a far deeper Nature than the earth's—

Whose scroll was heaven, whose syllables the stars—
Was open to his gaze. A faithful wife,
The first love of his youth, abode with him,
And strove to soothe his sorrows; for his heart
Was often heavy, and full oft his brow
Would cloud with silent meaning, and his eye
Film o'er with tears, as I have seen a lake
Gloom on a sudden as a storm passed by.
The cause was this, Albertus had no child—
In all things else unmurmuring; here he sought
To make his influence serve his private hopes,
And said, " My wife, it may be, bears a son."

II.

The sage was looking mournfully abroad
When night was something worn; the moon was up,
And shone supreme in chaste and tender light,
Like a good woman's influence on the heart;
And far apart, and all about the sky,
The wandering planets and the mighty stars,
Solemnly marching through solemnity,
Shot one to other mute intelligence:
" Still in the night of knowledge, O my soul!
And still, though all the stars around are plain,

Thy house of offspring shows a stubborn void."
He closed the casement, and sate down in gloom,
And almost wished to cast away his life.
Meantime there was a humming all around,
Which well he understood; the air was full
Of all those subtle spirits that men hear,
But understand them not for worldliness;
And one said—" Up! O master, there is news,
Look forth upon the night." The seer arose,
Flung wide the casement, and looked forth again;
The moon was beaming yet, but as he gazed
Two stars shone forth, where clouds had been before;
Yet not with equal lustre; one still waned
And paled and flickered as the other burned,
And so they shone alternate. " See thy sons,"
The sylph was saying. " Yet God knew the best
What was best for thee: therefore be thou sure
Thy soul shall have great horror ere thy death.
Those neighbour stars alternately that shine
Because their little cressets have received
No further fire than would suffice for one,
Those while thy sons shall live upon the earth,
Shall be their symbol; I, thou knowest well,
Am of the air, and what I hear I speak."

III.

Albertus' brain was troubled, for he knew
The saying of the air-born was not false,
And that his children would be like those stars,
Mysteriously united; all their lives
To hang dependent one upon the other;
That when one erred, the other straight should mourn,
When one did good, the other fall away;
And fear there was, if one should die in peace,
The other should receive extreme despair
As his companion everlastingly.

IV.

Therefore Albertus grieved; yet not for that
Did time stand still. The mandate was gone forth,
And ere the moon had ten times lit her lamp
At the unquenchèd altar of the sun,
Albertus' wife had borne two lusty boys.
The neighbours and her gossips gave her joy,
And her pure heart had unalloyed content.
Still from that guiltless head let grief be far,
Although Albertus suffer what is meet;
Certes his brow grew dark and darker still,

And if he knew the future destiny
Of those young infants, he could scarce be glad.

v.

And they grew up unconscious. Beautiful
It is to see the growth of lovely minds
Set in fair bodies, and the boys were fair;
But the twin horns o' th' crescent do not shine
With a more equal beauty than did they.
And ever as they grew, whate'er they wrought,
Whether they took their sport, whether they learned,
In street, in church, in hall, and in the field,
There was a fate about them working still;
And all men saw a wonder in the lads,
But none except their father knew the cause.

vi.

And now the hour came round that comes to all,
The first and final breaking up of home—
Joy to the fool, but sorrow to the wise;
For wise men know that on that gloomy day
They leave their childhood's home for evermore:
And though they may be happier than the most,
And come again, in autumn's wasting time,

Among the scenes that nourished their young spring,
They will not find a home there any more.
" Distance," the father thought, " may break the spell"—
So Conrad lived at Frankfort still with him,
While Ernest had his rudiments at Bonn.

Part the Second.

I.

Intuitive as dreams on Ernest's soul
There ever lay a wondrous influence,
But never dreamed he of the link which bound
His spirit to his brother's.
Many a time
Impulse of good, and love to human kind,
And noble thoughts of duty, filled his heart;
His only grief was hearing that his brother
Was drinking deep of sins that please in youth.

II.

Bonn as it was would seem a fairy town,
A dream of rich disorder to our eyes,
With churches which new converts had begun

Who kept St. Woden in their calendar,
Planned after caverns in the wilderness
In which their father or themselves had dwelt,
Where the Hercynian forests hug the sides
Of spirit-haunted mountains, and hide springs
Where wails the lone nymph; or that sombre wood
Where city-feeding Danube has his head:
Such churches were there finished by the toil
Of sedentary monks with Roman names
And very cunning skill of penmanship:
Whereby the church was finished like a book
Whose binding was of stone, embossed and rich,
And windows tinted with all glowing hues
Were the illuminations and the signs.
And there were houses like the dens of beasts,
And others like the angular airy fanes
Which children build in sport, for buttress light
And overhanging roof-eaves made them quaint,
And groin and gargoyle, mullion and joist,
And blackened beams, and carven window-frames.
Emblazoned were the men like picture-cards
Who walked in those high streets, and did not know
Their garb was fanciful—it kept them warm;
And in the house where Ernest lodged himself,

The master was a man whose outward form
Was like that burly monarch, he of hearts,
A ruddy man, with very massive steps
And an unceasing smile, and comely wife.

III.

His wife had loved him once, for he had been
A gallant springald in his morning time;
But years of self-indulgence, in what seemed
A genial sense of being, had come on,
Each worse than that which did precede, and still
He thought himself deservedly beloved,
And still preserved the outward signs and shows
Of kindness and of hospitality,
—Like pictured flowers above an empty shrine—
Upon his hollow, vain, and coward heart.

IV.

She was a merry daughter of Liège
Who smiled on him, as he on her, from use;
But disappointment had not parched her heart
With such consuming fires, but that she thought
That other men might love her truly still;
And so it chanced with Ernest in her house—

The unconscious child of fate—and many a time
They sate in that high latticed room at Bonn,—
That room the ivy shaded, all the year;
And there, when the sun shone, his dusty ray
Shot slant across the middle emptiness,
Which elsewhere even at high noon was dark;
And all about them hummed the summer flies,
Chattered the jays and daws, warbled the thrush:
Or, when at even these were hushed in sleep,
A full-toned hymn went up from voicelessness.
The song that tells of life that wastes with ours,
The under-hum of silences of night,
The beams that part in darkness—and the click
Of the red coals collapsing in the stove,
The falling of the plaster, or the flap
Of distant doors when the low breeze of night
Lacks force to hold them open—these should yield
A sad intelligible harmony,
Unless all ears are haply waxen gross.

V.

One day she came not near him, and he felt
A sense of terror shooting through his brain,
A chillness falling on his sickened heart.

The next day and the next she came not near.
The merry man, the massive man of smiles,
Gay as of old, said she was gone away
A long uncertain journey, did not know
When, why, or how she could come back again.
Then Ernest felt she owed her death to him:
And at that season of extreme distress
Letters arrived from Conrad cheering him,
Wherein he said, " My vices are put by,
And I have waked to work man's nobler ends."
Deeper and deeper sunk the dubious shade
Upon young Ernest's spirit. " Ah," he said,
" No goodness I perceive remains for me,
Would I had never seen this hateful light;
I undertook not of my own free will
To work this terrible task of life, and yet,
Behold, I perish if I work it not."

VI.

Now Ernest had a friend who marked this change,
And gently chid him for it: dark of soul
The young man turned upon him, pouring out
Most bitter words. But with the learned youths

Of German schools in those chivalric days,
There was but one could minister for this,
That all-determining sage, Magician Sword.
And Ernest wrote in weariness of heart
A mocking letter, and bade Conrad tell
His story to his father if he died;
But Conrad sent a soothing answer back.
Then all the man was moved, his pride was dead,
And long before the day of conflict came
Love was restored between his friend and him.

VII.

And the time came that they should meet at home,
When Ernest told his brother what had chanced.
" Your letter," said he, " was a guide to me."
But Conrad scorned him and replied but this,
" Thou hast disgraced the honours of our name."
The miserable father saw these things,
And looking out upon the turbid clouds
Before the sunset, said within himself,
" Knowledge like this is worse than ignorance; "
So, lest his sons should suffer like himself,
He kept the matter secret till he died.

VIII.

When he was dead, the twins made equal share
Of all his wealth, and when the time was spent
That decent mourning for a father craves,
Conrad went forth to travel with his share,
But it pleased Ernest best to stay at home;
So he abode and was a merchant there,
And throve and prospered, and his store increased.
But Conrad was a wanderer, and he came
Upon his travels to a Flemish town
Destroyed long since by war and pestilence.

IX.

This town was governed by a Spanish lord,
Whose only daughter kept her father's house—
A most fair maid, and in the budding time
When the blood stirs, and all is meet for love,
And only waits its coming: the young girls
Of her acquaintance took her for their queen,
And formed themselves on Mona's words and ways.
Her hair was golden, but her eyes were black,
And in them lay a mystery, and her face
Had all the high-born features of Castile,
And all her Flemish mother's brilliant cheek.

So she was very lovely, somewhat strange,
Quick, eager, full of wit, yet womanlike;
And not so much reserved as without heed
Of what the world thought; and in seeming too
She put not in her brightest moments forth
Her real nature;—not dispassionate,
But ever sacrificing self to self;
Briefly, though young she was a very woman
To give high happiness or lead to bale.

X.

Now there was something in young Conrad's mould
That drew him to this woman, her to him;
Therefore at early morning and at night
They looked upon creation hand in hand,
And talked of spirits, and of alchemy,
And demons of the Brocken, and the men
Who lived a savage life amid such things,
Working the ore in furnaces by night,
That glowed afar like any happy home:
So that the traveller, having passed away
With peril from the Urus and the Bear,
And thinking "I have found a resting-place,
Belated in the forest," fled along

Still faster from the wild unearthly shouts
And mocking laughter as of airy tongues,
That sounded from the forge which, for so long
Had been a pole-star to him :—or of days
Whole months in length among the sledded Finns,
And fur-wrapped Lapons of the frozen seas.
Amid such talk their hours of youth sped by,
And verily they thought within themselves
There was no future, but a present still.

XI.

Lastly, his lordship thought it good to say
That he had seen the cause that knit them so;
" He had himself been smitten in his youth"
(So he delivered), " and would not cross their
hopes,"
—For Conrad pleased him, being of good stock,
And wealthy—and (because he had a son
He could give Mona scanty dowry) he
Gave his consent that they should be betrothed,
But would not have them marry at that time
" Because of youth;" but he was full of plans,
And an old practised courtier.

Whereupon

Conrad and Mona interchanging vows,
The youth took leave of them and went his way.

Part the Third.

I.

The birds were scarce awake; the butterflies,
Bees, and all tribes that live about sweet flowers,
Had not yet met the morning; for they knew
The petals would not open, till the sun
Had mounted something higher (now he hung
Like a red banner, o'er the gates of dawn),
As Conrad came out swiftly from the town,
And spurred his horse against the opposite hill,
And gaily sang again the parting song
He had lagged behind to sing in Mona's ear.

" The streets of cities, and the paths of woods,
  The strains of song-birds, and the speech of men,
Shall be to me one thought in many moods;
  Shall make me sorrowful, and yet again
Shall steep my sorrow in a flood of pleasure,
  Till, like the bird of sun-adoring ken,

My soul shall see a glory without measure,
Beyond the cloudland where the thunder speaks
High overhead, and lightnings cleave the peaks."

II.

Spain had by this filled high her bloody cup
In Flanders; and that race of forceful men,
Unbending Alva, crafty Requesens,
And John of Austria, the warlike lord,
Had wrought the people to such stubborn mood
As would not brook repression; and began
That downward course in Spanish destinies
Which yet is scarce accomplished.
Thou wert there,
William the Silent, faithful prince and good!
And false Anjou, and fickle Cassimere;
And there was hurrying to and fro by day,
And the night waked with arquebuse and torch;
And every town was full of black Walloons
And lawless Lansquenets, and Spanish knights
Chivalric in their bigotry, and grave,
And bearing out base enterprise and plot,
With mottoes that would honour a crusade.

But the stout burghers, men of peaceful mien,
Were mighty in resistance, and their deeds
In many an ancient town and marshy isle,
Told of a nation roused by years of wrong,
And warned all politic Spanish noblemen
That neither they nor their fair daughters' weal
Would prosper long in Flanders:—
So the Count
Arose, and took his Mona, and his wealth,
His two dear treasures, and departed thence,
And dwelt in peaceful Frankfort, Conrad's home.

III.

But his son, youth-like, and inflamed by rage
Against those headstrong citizens, remained,
And dwelt in camp with John of Austria
And great Farnese; till at Rimenant,
Where thronged the melée round the Scottish flag,
Amid the tramp, the rattle, and the roar,
And shouts, and oaths, and cries of every land,
In smoke and mutilation and amaze,
Giving and taking wounds, he fell to earth,
And, crushed and mangled, died in agony.

IV.

Now Ernest saw the maid his brother loved,
And, knowing who she was, loved her himself.
The politic Spaniard saw, and chid him not.
So when there came the tidings from the wars
That Charles, his son, was dead, he said at once,
" Now have I acted like a man of wit,
For now, behold, my daughter is mine heir;
Nor is it meet that she bestow herself
On one that is a very prodigal,
And spends his goods in seeing foreign lands,
When here at home is one who loves her well,
His brother, well to do, a prudent man."
Thus covetousness had the mastery;
And having bent his mind to do the wrong,
He also sought to make his daughter bend.

V.

Till lastly Mona thought within herself,
" There is small difference between these two,
That I should cleave to one for bygone vows,"
For absent men with women suffer wrong.
Moreover, Ernest was a man of wealth;

So after due reserves and womanly nays
She married Ernest—in an evil hour.

VI.

Conrad, meanwhile, was spending happy hours,
—The happiest hours a man can ever live,
Spent in anticipating happiness—
And when the time arrived that had been fixed,
He came to Frankfort, for since many a day
He knew by letter that his love was there.

VII.

And it was winter time when he returned,
A weird and witching winter, for they say
That many men that year, in the shape of wolves,
Went howling through the villages at night,
With shapeless ones, who made men's blood run cold.
Bitter it was to Conrad, for he found
He had been wronged; but Ernest was ashamed,
And wept hot tears upon his brother's neck,
Who burst from him, and ran into the wastes,
And, wandering to and fro among the rocks,
Where one or two small trees were shivering,

Peeling their wan arms in the sleety wind,
He communed with the devils that haunt such
ground,
And made his heart as stony as the place,
Seeing he was bankrupt both in wealth and love,
While Ernest throve, and had good store of wealth,
And her he thought his own.
His heart grew wild,
And beat no more in order; he waxed proud,
Returning scorn with scorn, and brought a curse
Upon himself, which made him in the end
A gloomy sinner, impotent and mad.

VIII.

For from that hour he lost the love of good,
And ever strove to tempt his brother's wife:
She gave him such an answer as the Gods
Might render to the Titans, when they sought
Admission to Olympus, not all scorn,
But a kind of pity, holy and severe.
Then his whole soul was changed; he loved her yet
(If love it could be called), and swore an oath
That she should love him, and that she should feel
Something of that which he had felt for her.

At length she did so, and a shadow fell
Across her path, and lay there; for he said
(Because he wished his triumph should be full),
" Leave thou this man and come and live with me."

IX.

Yet even in that hour of victory
Conrad could feel repentance.
So he rose
And went unto his brother—for he thought
Of all his brother's kindness long ago,
And of their walks in bygone summer nights,
That seemed like glimpses from a better life,
They were so purified by memory;
And of their gentle mother long departed,
And of their grave and noble sire, who looked
With wide brow ever forward into space,
Like one who saw a vision,—Conrad thought
Of these things till his eyes became as wells
Brimming spontaneous water, and he knelt,
And in his deep remorse uttered such words
As one would think who heard them standing by
Would move an idol; but the angry heart
Of Ernest kept its wrath; he bade him go

And whine unto his leman; last of all,
He spurned him from him with a silent scorn.

x.

Conrad rose slowly and departed thence;
And though his brother called aloud to him,
And would have died to see him smile again,
The hour was gone for peace between the twins;
For Conrad clenched his teeth, and spoke no word,
But went home and sate brooding all alone
Till Mona came.
She said, "What aileth thee?"
"Nothing is wrong," he answered, "nothing ails;
It did no injury, for if you look
You will perceive no mark: and yet—'tis strange
That one of my name ever should get a blow,
And should not give it back with usury."
She answered, "Did that dog your brother so?
O be a man, take counsel for yourself,
For well I know him—would I knew him not.
Oft when he seems most savage, he will turn,
Without a cause, and instantly be mean,
And crouch and fawn to him that he did spurn,
And then his anger blazes out again,

And he is like a fearful beast of prey:
Therefore I hold we counsel for our lives."
"Nay, is he so?" quoth Conrad: "by my faith
It is most wonderful; 'tis always thus
With me too, for even now, when in his sight,
I felt such alternations at my heart,
I knew not whether to repent or strike,
Nor what brought either feeling; yet I swear
I have known no change since I received that blow."

XI.

Ernest, meanwhile, was sorrowing by himself,
And praying Heaven's forgiveness with tears
And contrite heart, because he had not heard
His brother's recantation; for he thought
"He had confessed his fault, my erring brother,
And it was not for me to tread him down."

Part the Fourth.

I.

Deep in the Harz-Wald, in a mountain's roots,
There is a dark and unexplored recess

Whose narrow mouth, masked with a liberal growth
Of stone-embracing brambles and strong thorns,
Is fearful to the shepherds; woe to him
Whose flock, led by the ram's familiar bell,
Seek refuge in that cavern, though the snow
Drift from the pelting east, and the slant gust
Howl, hiss, and roar on their unsheltered sides.
Never for them the Titan of the day
Shall shed reviving influence, nor the earth
Renew her thick and thyme-delighted herb
Close bitten and redundant: for within,
In shineless pools of water, there abide,
Fair, false, and fatal Ondines; and above,
Where damp prismatic stalactites at noon
Scarce throw their borrowed rays along the front,
And all the rest is blackness, hover still
Weary, complaining Sylphs, that fear the light
Which is their punishment, and loathe the air
Which is their prison; where the earth-born fires
Spring miles beneath the cavern's floor, and rage
On all sides till they find the only stream
That leads to distant Hecla; in that flood,
E'en in the central vortex, hotly bathe
The shapeless Salamanders; and the Gnomes

Work all night in the cave, and counterfeit
The short-lived craft of human artisans,
In ware more perishable still than theirs.

II.

Whatever spirits haunt the solitudes
Which the unlearned people with their fears,
The learned with their slaves, in that abyss
Such beings dwell, and throng its galleries;
And whensoever the severe command
Of some hermetic, purified in heart
By chastity, and prayer, and abstinence,
And study, such as few have courage for,
And veneration of the Rosy Cross,
Coerces those forsaken ones, they meet
In busy conclave, and bestir themselves,
Unwillingly, to benefit mankind.

III.

The Sylph, that brought the message to Albertus,
Had tarried with the twins; such was the power
Of that enchanter, that, though dead himself,
His art yet ruled the air-born, and would rule
Until the Mighty should reverse the spell,

And the twins' destiny find end in death;
And, for Albertus had been nowise harsh,
But used her ever gently, she had learned
To love his children, and it grieved her much
To feel the racking and vicissitude
Which echoed in herself the ceaseless change
Swaying between the brothers; and at length,
When came the final horror of their life,
And one of them was thirsting for the blood
Which ran in veins that might have been his own,
The air-born woke the echoes of that cave
With bitter and loud weeping, so that men
Passing the pit's mouth, shuddered at the noise;
And all the diverse spirits that were there
Were troubled in their elemental beds,
And rushed into the grotto where she was.

IV.

The leader of the Spirits of the Fire
Laughed as he leapt, and said "What aileth thee?"
The mournful Ondine shook her dripping head
And asked, "Whom shall we snare to death for thee?"

The Gnome said—" I have dead leaves which my
boys
Shall coin to tempt thy wrongers to their fall,
And fairy swords and harnesses of proof;
To mortal eyes they seem so, but they are
More perishable than the middle branch
That died three autumns since. What aileth thee ?"
Her sister Sylphs by this had gathered round
That pale and unconsoled one, and had bent
Kind looks, that soothed her more than others'
words.
But the air-born knew the stars were mightier far
Than all those spirits, and unless those twain
She had shown Albertus should unite in one,
She wist not how those brethren both should live
Each without detriment to the other's weal.

v.

Therefore that day, and many days and years,
She tarried in anxiety and woe,
Nor would take comfort of her fellow sylphs,
Nor gnomes, nor salamanders, nor ondines,
Nor kindly dwarfs, nor kobolds, nor small fays;
But folding sorrow round her like a robe,

Remained in silence and in solitude,
And dared not tell the twins their destiny,
But gazed upon the faces of the stars.

VI.

Till Mona passed away and was forgot,
And they two still unconsciously pursued
The middle and the downward way of life,
Apart, alone, forgetful each of each,
Yet knit each to the other as of yore;
And happiness was only known to them
When they looked back upon the fading fields
Which memory made bright with golden beams,
Throwing long, vague-shaped shadows far before;
And night was gathering round in awful gloom.

VII.

Conrad lay on his deathbed, fiercely rent
With alternations strong of fear and hope,
Which lasted till the flesh was worn away,
And the exhausted passions of his life
Showed that they lingered, but by tears and moans.
And the air-born felt a shudder of delight

E'en in her cool and solitary cell,
And looking up upon the dark-blue night,
Saw a cloud float before those fatal stars
She had so long watched anxiously: the thought
Of what was doing in the vaults of fate
Impelled her through vast heaven: far away,
The prior of a convent, an old man
Whose upturned face, silvered with moonlight, still
Spoke of a mortal terror, saw that cloud,
And felt a swift convulsion: the Sylph stood
Unseen, beside him, whispering that she bore
—Such was her privilege—the joyful news
That all his griefs were ended, and repose
Should lull his soul for ever. "Ah!" he said,
"This balmy rest, this sense that doubt is dead!
The mysteries that haunted us are o'er;
My brother, we are one for evermore."
The cloud broke up in mist-wreaths and thin bars,
But never man again beheld those stars;
One orb remained, and, flaming bold and bright,
Gathered redoubled fire and beautified the night.

PERHAPS.

NOW, that the house is hushed, and my faithful servant is sleeping,
Helpless and still I lie, and talk with myself and the night lamp;
Still I lie, but soon to be stiller yet in my coffin:
Too weak, now, to fear as I did (but that is all over)
When my friend the Surgeon calmly pronounced my sentence,—
"You may live three weeks," he said, "by the strength that is in you;"
But the Chaplain frowned, and muttered "By favour of Heaven;"—
That is a month ago, for again we have letters from England,
Full of life and hope, and plans for an early meeting.

Some of them there will be sorry; the brothers will surely regret one,
(Even Augustus, tho' he and I have been bad friends lately);
Surely the children, too, will suffer a sense of desertion:
These and those, for a short time alike, for different reasons.
They who are old are cold, made hard by life's disappointments;
They who are young are light, and their memories run like water,
When the brook loosens the mould, and leaves the stain on the bridge pier,
And flows on clear again, till once more momently troubled:
Gus and I have often seen such water in fishing,—
Pleasant days of our boyhood! short, but we wished them shorter:
Long enough now are the days, with nothing in them of action,
Only thinking to do, and Thought, they say, is eternal.

How, if we always thought? perhaps we should
live for ever?
This, perhaps, is what is meant by Life Ever-
lasting?
"Perhaps." For this to me is the only form of
assertion.
Only I know that God is good, and I am his
creature;
While I live to walk in His ways as far as I see
them,
When I die to take my rest in the House of a
Father.
Yet the Known is known, with all its sweet and
bitter,
And the Unknown is hid, and Nature abhors the
Hidden;
Better my poor night lamp to me than the blackness
of Darkness!
Hard was life, no doubt, but harder still to
leave it,
Never again to see the garden plots in the sun-
shine
Stir their odorous heads at the cheerful call of the
Westwind;

Never again to hear in the boughs the song of the linnets,
When they pair in spring, and the bright green copses are ringing;
Never again to join half pleased in the play of the children
Shouting in thoughtless glee, as they chase a kid or a spaniel;
Never again to kiss the white soft hand of a woman
Lying like yours in the long ago, O my love, on my shoulder.
You too were torn from life, but I did not see you departing,—
Strangers, hirelings, sate unmoved at your meek dissolution;
There where the myrtles bloom in the airs of the Mediterranean,
And the tideless bay fawns soft upon sunny Salerno.
Yet no murmur of yours found way to me here in your letters,—
I have not read them since, but I keep them,—O, I keep them,

Once in your rosewood desk, and once in the Ark
of my spirit,
Feebly seeking to learn from them to follow your
patience,
Even as I follow your road and hope to find you
hereafter,
If it please His merciful Will to me unworthy.
The Chaplain came to-day, and said I was sure to
meet her
If I believed; perhaps he knows, for that is his
office;
I trust in God for the end, but have not strength to
determine,—
Nor is it worth the labour, for soon will doubting
be knowledge.
I am too faint to think any more, or even to waken
The servant sleeping at hand; I cannot see where
the light is;
Perhaps my eyes are closing in sleep, perhaps I am
dying,—
Perhaps I may soon awake in a happy and endless
morning.

SOWING THE WIND.

ERE, in the Christmas night, where no
dear joy-bells sound,
With a moon like a moon of summer
on fruit and flower and leaf,
Where never a feathery flake fell soft on the thirsty
ground,
Where Winter adds nothing to joy and takes
away nothing from grief:
Here, as I sit alone and look at the sleeping trees,
What you said an hour ago turns round in my
mind:
" Perilous tempests," you said, " are brewed in
nights like these,
" And the people are quiet enough, but you are
sowing the wind."
We are sowing the wind, you said, and you think
God only can know,
When the harvest, or what: be it so, we are well
in His hand;

And his years shall not fail, bringing gifts as they
come and go,
And bringing the harvest nearer, nearer to us
and the land;
Sorrowing seasons, belike, and a sun the colour of
blood,
For a country, where rulers and ruled are akin,
but less than kind;
They think they are better than we; they may
some day be as good,
And this is what we toil for; but this you call
sowing the wind.
All of us sow the wind; there is not a heart but
bleeds.
When I look back on my life, in the gloom of
the gloaming day,
I find it paved with ruins, tangled with thorns and
weeds,
And bordered on either hand with tombs, like
the Appian way.
Many a wild oat fell on the side of that short sad
path;
Many a storm destroyed its bloom, but left be-
hind

Trust in place of terror, and ruth the relict of wrath;
And I, for one, am none the worse for sowing the wind.
But all, whatever we sow, have a work of care and of fear,
Stript of youth's delights, eating bread in the sweat of the brow;
Phantoms of doubtful shape by the bed of the dying year;
Work in the Taskmaster's eye, and a harvest that is not now,
Yet it will not tarry; and these are good, we know;
Strength for staggering steps, and truth for the troubled mind;
Surely men must reap according as each shall sow.
Shall not our harvest be good, we who are sowing the wind?
A wind of knowledge of Nature, a wind of love and truth,
A breath of the strong on the weak,* a spirit of Pity on pain;

* According to Eastern tradition, the healing power of Jesus resided in his breath.

Teaching an ancient nation the lessons of Europe's
youth;
Blowing the chaff away from the heaps of whole-
some grain;
Winging from Helicon height with a whisper of
dawning Art;
Health and peace to the sick, and giving of sight
to the blind;
Freshness from Galilee's Mount to many a weary
heart;
Shedding good tidings abroad, a holy and hea-
venly wind.

WORSHIP.

HAVE heard the Mass in Philip's gloomy fane,
Over the ashes of a line of Kings;
French Friars' epigrams on sacred things,
And Vespers in the vaulted Vatican.
Daily through many an English Minster rolls
Rome's stolen thunder, while the sunshine falls

Through painted panes on desolated stalls,
Where spiders riot in the dearth of souls.
The Nonconformist roars his sturdy hymn,
Exalts triumphantly his holy horn
And pays the Pharisee with scorn for scorn,
Who flouts his services on Gerizim.
Not there, nor there the charity and ruth
That see a neighbour where they see a man,
That find a friend in the Samaritan
And worship God in spirit and in truth.

ST. JOHN'S IN THE WILDERNESS.

AN EPISTLE.

DO you remember, Arthur, where we went
The day before you left my Father's house?
We had been riding upon Woodbury;
That barren moor, high-rising to the clouds,
Had drawn the shower on us, and we sought
To gain some shelter from the pitiless storm,

With which intent we struck into a lane.
The storm passed off; the yawning earth had drunk
To overflowing, and the gaps were full;
The water sparkled, dripping from the trees,
The day-god shed his comfortable beams,
And the heat shook upon the distant hills.
We came upon a little lonely church—
A wilderness of weeds; an old farm-house;
A thickly-tangled copse surrounding all;
A solitary spot! It seemed that Time
Stood still, suspended over it, and threw
The shadow of his wings between the place
And the broad glare of Now; we could not be
Looking on it, men of the present day—
Of railways, newspapers, and moral force,
But rather men that had been—so the place
Appeared to throw its influence over us.
Not without purpose had I led you there;
I knew 'twould please you well, that lonely spot,
Where not a sense could minister to aught
Save to the genius of the place—the Past.
We turned aside to marvel at the tombs,
Whose old inscriptions, and armorial signs
Told of a generation long gone by.

The birds, rejoicing in the sun's return,
Made merry music round us; and my dog
Ran joyfully about, and took her sport
In the rank grass that grew among the graves.
We heard around us in the summer air
The sounds the dead had heard in vanished years,
The harmony of nature; she had seemed
As fresh to them as now she did to us,
Smiling on their graves as she will on ours.
The neighbouring peasant never enters here
But three times in his life, and twice of these
Unconsciously. First in his mother's arms,
A round and helpless baby; once again,
In mellow manhood, with his ruddy bride;
And once a burthen, passive as its bier:
This little church, half-ruined, and alone,
Is yet the solemn theatre, where Life
Acts its great Trilogy.

Arthur, farewell!
When under fervent skies you long for home
Think sometimes of St. John's, and when you hear
—As hear perchance you will—of strife to come,
And utter Reformation (for be sure
There is a purpose in the coming time

That will not be denied) remember then
The lessons that we learned together there;
That things have value only of themselves,
Not as or old or modern; that the World
Leaves, as it passes, nothing but the Good,
The workmanship and joy of Him to whom
There is no " was" nor "will be," in whose sight
A thousand years are even as yesterday.

HEREAFTER.

I LOVE not that philosophy
Which holds that, when this life shall pass,
The souls of men will be
Drawn back in Deity;
(Reading the Heaven with earthly wisdom's glass).

God is the Spirit's fountain;
Yet rivers that in Alps have birth,
Seek not again the summit of the mountain;

But, flowing here and there, as nature bids,
  Conquer disease and dearth,
Lave forests, cities, pyramids,
  And share the joy, the plenty of the earth.

Nor will I be of those who deem
  That these eternal days
  Sleep in a tranced haze,
Through which blest spirits may float,
  Singing perpetual praise,
Until the unchanging note
Makes of Heaven's glory but a languid dream.

  This earth of ours,
With all its various wealth of life and love,
  Innocent song-birds, ever-springing flowers,
  Joys of home-love, and friendship's festive hours,
We do but pass it through,
We know it is not true;
Yet fondly long to find it, there, above!

A DREAM AT SEBASTOPOL.

METHOUGHT I heard the trumpet sound
In a sky of flaming red,
And the graves on Earth were all unbound,
And the sea gave up her dead.
And I saw the mountains totter,
And the wicked vainly seek
A hiding-place beneath the face
Of crumbling crag and peak.

The revellers also left their feast,
And their tables overthrown,
To flock for comfort to the priest;
But he—his very organ ceased
Its counterfeited groan;
Only the trumpet still increased
The terror of its tone.

Some muttered low—some wept aloud—
Some raved, some idly smiled;

But one was calm in all the crowd,
A lonely pauper-child.
The priest drew near—" Dost thou not fear
God's judgment?" whispered he;
" Think of thy sins—our doom begins."
" Why should I fear?" said she.

" When mother lived her life of shame
You passed us by, nor ever came
With counsel or with bread;
The next world cannot be the same—
I need not fear," she said.

I woke—the men were falling in
To reinforce the French,
And all was bugle-call and din
About me in the trench.
We fought an hour in smoke and flame,
But ever was in my ear—
" The next world cannot be the same,"
And " what have we to fear?"

MORNING.

BY this the land, that, through the hours of night
Had lain in silent slumber, slowly turned
Her fruitful bosom to the Lord of Light,
He waiting, like a joyful bridegroom, burned
With deathless youth's perpetual brightness, bright.

HOME.

NOW the summer-heats are ended,
Now the autumn-damps are dried,
Once again we breathe in pleasure,
Seated by the Yule-fire-side.

Roses deck our hearth for hollies,
Christmas blooms, and dog-days burn,
Motley hues of fortune's favour
Bid us smile, and weep, in turn.

Seat you here, my own true-hearted,
Pour the red Oporto wine,
Brew your draught from China's vintage
I will seal a pledge with mine.

" Absent friends !"—the glass you fill me
Runs not her libation thus ?—
Misty eyes and softened features—
" Here's to those who drink to us."

One who leans on home for comfort
Sows in joy to reap in tears;
Still his walls increase their weakness,
Every new defence he rears.

" Absent friends !" the words recall us
What was good and what is gone;
Some are false, and some—God help us !—
And we two are left alone.

REGRET.

WHY weep you for the dead?
It boots not them nor you,
Nor speaks a spirit bold and true
To pine for what is fled.
Few be your mourning days
And cheered with notes of praise.

The dead are gone to rest,
Their being is with God.
The path their happy feet have trod
The Saints in turn have pressed.
Let not your tears be shed
So vainly for the dead!

If weeping be your mind,
Mourn for the parted years,
For them let fall the precious tears
That will not make you blind;
How loud soe'er you plain
For them, 'twill not be vain.

True part of you were they
That will not meet you more,
Yet better far their loss deplore
Than bid them go their way:
Pluck from this buried root
Its rough but saving fruit.

The dead come not, nor speak,
Mourn you the whole night long;
They heed no more your wailing song
Than your poor dripping cheek.
These come though dead also
With more hope than ye know.

They speak of love and hate,
Of gifts you once despised;
They cry—those friends so little prized—
"It is not yet too late."
Weep, till they tell you this,
And find your grief your bliss.

SONNETS.

THE DYING WIFE.

H, be you near me when I meet my doom,
Till looking upon yours I close my eyes,
And, softly sinking, hear with glad surprise
The voice of Jesus call me through the gloom:
But never come to weep upon my tomb,
Nor think that I shall answer to your cries;
You will but hear the breezes as they rise
To cheer the Bees that labour in the bloom.
Bear, dearest, patiently your altered lot,
Still aid whatever mortals need your care,
Yet often, after I am quite forgot,
Your secret heart may sigh, "She is not there,"
When your eye falls upon my vacant chair,
And your companions comprehend you not.

TRUE LOVE.

THE Lover who is worthy is not he
Who hunts in sport some unfamiliar
Dove;
The chase, while chase it lasts, is not above
A trivial impulse; but, if one can see
Change courting him, yet for no change will move
From her of whom he knows each mystery,
Sets wealth and honour in her custody,
And makes each daily task a labour of love,
Because in each his heart will still devise
How he may rather work than she should weep;
Who, when at night he hears her happy sighs,
Sink softly in the welcome trance of sleep,
Beholds with joy the dew of slumber steep
The rosebud petals of her darling eyes.

TO A LADY IN DEJECTION.

WHEN all was well with you, your friends were glad,
As shepherds gladdened in the glow of June,
While, in Arcadian valleys—lass and lad—
Their hearts beat time to Love's delightful tune;
Yet something of fatigue and fear they had,
As those who felt the day must darken soon,
And so endured, with souls half turned to sad,
The inevitable scrutiny of noon.
Now, when the rarer smile a moment plays
Upon the new-born softness of your eye,
We hail it as a promise of delight,
Such as, upon the falling of the Night,
The husbandman predicts for future days
From lambent lightnings of the shaded sky.

TO TIME.

WHEN setting constellations counsel sleep,
All through the silent watches of the night,
Then, when the maiden Dawn, with chrysolite,
Paves the great Sun's path up the Eastern steep,
All through the working hours of dusty day,
I miss her, miss her, always, everywhere,
To nerve my labours, or to soothe my care.
Time, flying Time! I do not bid thee stay,
But rather let my thoughts outwing thy pace,
So might I once, before my manhood vanish,
Behold her free from all but love's alarms,
Fold her dear form within these empty arms,
See my own love reflected in her face,
And hear the voice my memory will not banish.

SARAH AND HAGAR.

" The keener a Poet's intuition of the ideal, the more does he require a corresponding urgency in his sense of the real."
Edinburgh Review, July, 1851.

THE man who, wedded to a formal round
Of uncongenial duties, also wooes
Science, or sweeter Art, may never choose
Which he shall cleave to, being duly bound
To his stern helpmate; yet (if so 'tis found
From long experience) both must have their dues,
Hard-visaged Duty, and the unfruitful Muse:
The lark's warm nest is ever on the ground,
Though he himself be minstrel of the skies,
And all the joyance of his heavenly singing
Be but the overflowing of such mirth
As from his earthly pleasures doth arise:
Shout, Poet, till the starry spheres are ringing
Antæus-like, thy strength is still from earth..

COLONISATION.

I.

FREEMEN of England, nourish in your mind
Love for your land, though poor she be and cold;
Impute it not to her that she is old,
For in her youth she was both warm and kind.
True, it fits not that you should be confined
Within a grudging island's narrow hold,
That bred, but cannot feed you. O be bold,
Blue heaven has many an excellent fair wind;
Steer then in multitudes to other land,
Work ye the field, the river, and the mine,
Smooth the high hill, and fell the long-armed pine,
Till all God's earth be honourably manned,
But, that your glories may for ever stand,
Let love be with you, human and divine.

COLONISATION.

II.

LOVE, the foundation of the public weal,
As of the peace of houses—love, whose breach
Sundered two bands of common race and speech,
Whose rankling wounds on each side will not heal.
Therefore be warned in time: let none conceal
Brotherly yearnings, God-sent, each for each;
Pure human sympathies are high of reach,
For the realities which they reveal
Teach us to live in earnest; give us faith
Godward as well as human (none can say
"I will love only that which I have seen:")
By faith's lamp, fed with hope, the wise have been
Led to the land where, as the Tarsian saith,
Love rules when hope and faith are passed away.

FAREWELL TO H. W. S. ON LEAVING ENGLAND.

"SEPTIMI, GADES ADITURE MECUM."

ARRY, who would accompany your friend
To where the Kaffers chafe against our sway,
Or to the vexed surfs of Bengàla's bay;
Would that our pilgrimages both might end
Where Hertfordshire's green meadow-lands extend,
Or else where pastoral Medway's waters stray
Through Kent, sweet country of protracted May,
Whose gardens foreign vineyards cannot mend.
Smiles for me still that corner of the earth,
And calls for us from lanes and leafy hills.
There might we pass our days in decent mirth!
And when in death my ashes should repose,
You, meekly mindful of our bygone ills,
Should pay the tear poet to poet owes.

EAST AND WEST.

ALBEIT there lies a wondrous continent,
Joining well-nigh the poles with giant span,
Some of whose woods have not, since time began
Returned the echoes that creation lent,
Save to the rude voice of primeval man;
Some of whose towns' fame to all lands is sent
For arts of peace, or warlike armament,
While some lie mouldering deep in Yucatan:
Yet, cradle of the nations, ancient scene
Of deathless lives, and Death whereby we live,
Where men the tacit influence receive
Of thoughts that even when barren are not mean,
And nothing is but tells of what has been,—
Thou, Asia, thou hast taught me to believe.

NIGHTFALL.

HOW sweet it is at eventide to hear
The wearied cattle low, as home they move,
What time the happy birds all through the grove
Are pouring out their vesper-music clear:
And sweet the time to love-lorn shepherd's ear,
Who hears his dear one falter of her love.
Sweet to the poet, too, the hour must prove,
Lifting the soul to Thee, but freed from fear,
Parent of Good!
The solemn silence fills
The heart with love and awe, the crimson beams
Of day's departure deepen in the west,
Till twilight spreads her mantle on the hills;
O! then revive our long-forgotten dreams,
And painless sorrow rules the chastened breast.

NOCTURN.

DOES she dream of me when the lamp is low,
And the night grows weary and old,
When the mice in her chamber gibbering go,
And the owl sits out in the cold?
Does she dream of my first shy kisses,
In the wood, and her bashful fear,
Though the Pansy and wild Narcissus
Were the only witnesses near?
Does she dream of me?

Does she dream of me when the moonlight falls
On the creeper about her window,
And the leaves quiver restlessly out on the walls,
As the thoughts in her heart within do?
Does she dream of the future before her
Made bright by Love's rising beams,
Till the nightwind dies, and Aurora
Confirms in dispersing her dreams?
Does she dream of me?

THE ROSEBUD.

I WOOED her all the Autumn through,
And won, at last, this trivial pledge
Of what she felt, or cared to do,
—— A Rosebud from her Father's hedge.
It was not Passion's brittle chain
That held me to her side like this;
I scarcely hoped at last to gain
That dull delight—a sister's kiss.
I did not praise her fresh young face,
Nor press to mine her fairy form,
Though each with some peculiar grace,
A colder heart than mine might warm.
I never breathed a Lover's vow;
I urged no claim, obtained no pledge,
—— But what you see my tears on now,
This Rosebud from the garden hedge.

A MESSAGE.

A SPEAKING look, a look of Love,
That says, "No bar between us lies,"
To me were treasure far above
The lustre of the brightest eyes,
Or fabled dawns of Paradise.

No matter how she looked to men,
Whether her beauty were the theme
Of tongue, of pencil, and of pen;
Or if to me alone she'd seem
The glory of a happy dream.

But that so blest a human thing
Had willingly her will resigned
Obedient to her earthly king,
And worshipt him with heart and mind,
Still true to one when all were kind.

I am not one to much profess,
No rash enthusiast, no, not I;
Yet let her take this message—yes,
Though taking make her heart beat high—
For her I'd live, with her I'd die.

TO A FRIEND

WHO INSCRIBED A LINE OF THE AUTHOR'S IN A GIFT-BOOK HE SENT.

I HAD your book; the words you wrote
Seemed also yours — though only mine—
So much their sudden reading smote
My lids with brine.
Thus surely o'er our senses creep
The moods that to our age belong,
Till manhood's eyes are fain to weep
At boyhood's song.
As rolls the world from West to East,
The lands must lose the cheerful sun;

And so life's joy from great to least
Must surely run.
Ah! yet, when darkness veils the skies,
Stars shine that daylight hours forget;
So may our hopes in death arise,
When life's have set.

TO A. S.

HOW blame, how praise these songs of yours,
Greek scion of a Gothic line,
Young Chaucer flown with Attic wine,
Anacreon of the Troubadours?

Whose tragic robe in purple dyed
Flames gold through mud and blood and tears,
Trails doubtful in our listening ears,
And turns to blush the flush of pride.

The pride that springs from sudden thrill
At words so strong in days so weak,
And fades in shame on every cheek
That strength should stoop to fondle Ill;

Seek Falsehood in the fairest face,
And make sweet woman's love become
The Maiden of the traitor's doom,
With slaughter in her fierce embrace:

That Death should bloom on Beauty's root,
And Phallic frenzy foul the Muse;
Or God's anointed blindly choose
To wanton with a Prostitute.

DAY-DREAMS.

I.

TO *****.

COME, love, and seat you here awhile,
Cheer me with your happy smile:
Fast the days of life slip by;
Though each may now seem slow,
Comes swift and irresistibly
The last one, and we go.
This I know, and do but seek
That when dead I yet may speak.
Far away from English things,
Here my spirit folds her wings,
Content, if all she looks upon,

Even if neither rare nor strange,
Speak of pleasures she has known
Or hopes that cannot change.
Ever, as I gaze around
Our little chamber's hallowed ground,
Each familiar sight I see
Speaks aloud of home to me,
Here, and there beyond the sea,
And the fair home that is to be.
Familiar as their faces seem,
Do they not minister a dream
Of pasture green, and cool hill-side,
Waving wood, and moorland wide,
Distant meadows white with flocks,
Streams that shine among their rocks,
Stormy shadow broadly borne
O'er yellow fields of bending corn,
And sheeny sparklings of the sea
Heaving and murmuring delightedly?
In the long dawn of vernal day,
How often have I burst away,
Fared gaily through the sleeping town,
And wandered to the woods alone.
The bee hummed in the eglantine,

And the breeze swayed the curls of the young
woodbine,
The May scented the hedges along,
The lark was above like a star of song;
Through the hay-hung lanes we go
Over the stile, across the meadow,
Where the swift streams whispering flow,
Where the black pools sleep in shadow,
Where the angler seeks his sport,
That verdurer of nature's court,
Who never lets his occupation
Balk him of happy contemplation.
Look down, the long straight pike has past,
Like death's keen arrow, flying fast,
Where dace and minnows, silver-coated fools,
Are playing on the surface of the pools.
Look up, the thin-winged dragon-fly
Is insolently gleaming by;
Look up, the oak-tree stirs, and in it
Floods of sweet song betray the linnet;
Over all, the dark blue sky
Overhangs us smilingly,
Flecked with many fleecy wreathes,
As the watery west-wind breathes.

Look round, the primrose peeps at you
From a nest of crumpled leaves;
The periwinkle, bathed in dew,
Is like a maiden's eye of blue
Turned to the moon from under alien eaves.
The sword-grass, and the mimic rye,
The sainfoin, and the clover sweet,
And the chamomiles, that die
Spent in fragrance at your feet;
Every herb, wind-stirred, or shaking,
With some insect's tiny weight,
(Such as all around are making
Myriad noises delicate),
Swells the universal tone
That Summer sings—a music of her own.
False season! she has brought the shower—
Away to yonder trellised bower
Of clematis and vine;
The skies may weep ten times an hour,
As oft they'll smile and shine.
Here sit secure; or, better still,
Seek the hospitable mill,
Where the clattering cog-wheels ply,
And the clouds of white dust fly.

There, leaning at the casement, look
On the fresh and fragrant scene:
The drops flash in the eddying brook,
The grass puts on a softer green,
The spent rain whispers to the leaves—
Ceases; the shower is done;
The big drops hang upon the eaves,
And sparkle in the sun.
The images that memory yields
Are crowding on my mind,
Of ruined abbeys lone in fields,
With purple hills behind.
Of churchyards, with their tombs and yews,
Seen in a night of June,
What time the fertilizing dews
Are falling in the moon.
The little church, five hundred years,
Has been the spring of hopes and fears
To all the lowly villagers;
Who, with ancestral tombs around,
Meet weekly on the holy ground.
They seat them orderly within,
Seek pardon for acknowledged sin;
They see the tables of the law,

The altar that their fathers saw,
The war-worn banners, full of rents,
The helmets, with their stains and dents,
The Squire's great pew, the lacqueys tall,
A stately well-fed band,
Who mock the manners of the Hall,
Vicariously grand.
They hear the minister's calm voice,
The tinklings of a grazing flock,
The whispering trees, the runnel's noise,
The pulses of the ancient clock;
And all, like well-according parts,
Sound harmony to happy hearts.
And even when the misery
Of loved ones having ceased to be,
Had brought the black and hushed procession,
To see the friend love might not save
Take imperturbable possession
Of his last home—the grave;
And when the sun was dim and red,
That shone above that earthy bed,
Throwing a watery noon and brief
On autumn's worn and wind-beat leaf;
And, for the fog that wrapped the land,

30571B

The trees were like a spectral band;
Even then the lichen-covered tower,
  The yew trees, and the monuments
Consoled them, howsoe'er the hour
  Heaped up their withering discontents;
Save that nor hope nor memory,
  Nor thought of "sure and certain trust,"
Could quell the sob of agony
As fell those handfuls audibly—
  Gross earth, dead ashes, kindred dust.
Ah! come to me! the dream is flown—
Thank God, I am not all alone;
Thank God, no burthen on me lies,
  More than the homeless heart can bear,
For sadness, and tear-darkened eyes,
And visions vague, and memories,
  Are sweeter than despair.

II.

WHERE summer is, there 'tis fresh and fair,
For forest and field are gay,
When the sun looks down on tower and town,
That sparkle in the ray.
Upon the hills the morning breeze
No longer whispers in the broom,
The poplar throws a steadier shade,
The oak-tree sheds a broader gloom,
And in the hazel thicket hangs
The silence of a tomb.
For shades come o'er the face of day,
Tempering anon the genial May,
The light air softly drops,
And nestles in the tall tree-heads,
And stirs the violets in the glades,
The young leaves in the copse.
In such an hour as this
The earth-impeded soul,
Entranced with Nature's bliss,

Surmounts the bear-watched pole,
And the great space wherein the firm spheres roll;
Knows of a brighter sun,
Basks in his beams,
Sees crystal waters run,
And drinks their streams,
And spreads her wings and floats into the land of dreams,
—Dreams vague, uncomprehended: fold again
Those unfledged wings, poor captive of the clay!
The flesh has need of thee, thy moans are vain,
Vain thy forebodings of the dying day—
Only the world's fair beauty bids thee hope
That none more dark may lie beyond the cope.
But the beam, unsaddened,
Is on the wood,
And the soul is gladdened
And sways her mood
Into a chastened mirth, the joy of solitude.
Now the hushed noon,
Growing broad and bright,
Like the painless swoon
Of a deep delight,
Slumbers as calmly as a moonlit night.

The memories of childhood cannot pass
The joy of such an hour of Nature's joy;
The brawling of the brook, the lisping grass
Should charm the man more than they charmed
the boy;
They do—they do; I feel their influence
With fresh delight to-day, and unpolluted sense.
Sickness may bend the weak corporeal frame,
And grief anticipate the work of years,
Beautiful Nature's sights would still the same
Delight mine eye, even through the mist of tears:
The fountains of our pleasures need not change,
Though inexperience cease to veil the truth—
The senses' strength not circumscribe their range,
Nor the heart's impulses have age and youth.
O sun, earth, water, all-embracing sky!
May it be mine to see you smiling when I die.

III.

" God said, Let us make man in our own image."

TAND by the ocean;
Behold its undulating shelves,
How they alternately uplift themselves,
Their ceaseless motion!

Turn to the sky;
Night after night, the golden-visaged crowds
Peep at us through the clouds,
Till royal morning ope her dreaded eye.

Earth's days and hours,
Seed-time and harvest, cold and heat remain,
And bring forth fruit by sunshine and by rain,
After the flowers.

Unchanging laws
This brute creation's pulses sway—
Contented they obey,
No self-originated cause.

That power is given,
Of all created things, to Man alone,
Who is, if he will only take his own,
Made free of heaven.

IV.

TO * * * * *

LED by swift thought I scale the height,
And strive to sound the deep,
To find from whence I took my flight,
Or where I sleep my sleep;
But mists conceal that border-land
Whose hills they rest upon,—
Again, with forward face, I stand,
For gone is gone.

Sometimes I brood upon the years
I gave to Self and Sin;
Or call to mind how doubts and fears
Fled from a light within:

I might regret those errors past,
Might wish the light still shone,
Or check life's tide that ebbs so fast—
But gone is gone.

You too, my loyal-hearted wife,
Saw many a weary day,
When, on your morning sky of life,
The clouds of sorrow lay.
True friends departed—grief for them—
Joy for the false made known,
And over all this requiem,
That gone is gone.

The glare of many a spectral truth
Might haunt me still unchanged,
The broken purpose of my youth,
The loving hearts estranged.
But, turning to your love-lit eyes,—
The love-lit eyes shine on—
I thank my God with happy sighs
That gone is gone.

V.

HERE are fled the breezy summers,
With their sounds of bird and bee,
With their sounds of mowers whetting
Tinkling scythes about the lea?

With the labours of their mornings,
With the slumbers of their noons,
With the whispers of their twilights,
And the languor of their moons?

Where are now the pleasant autumns,
With their waving meres of corn,
With their many-coloured foliage
Wreathed with gossamers at morn?

With their sounds of pheasants calling
Mid the red and rustling leaves,
With their sounds of rustic revel
For the plenty of the sheaves.

Where, O where the merry winters,
With the rime upon the grass,
On the rock-like road the horse-hoofs
Making music as they pass?

Wanton boys on windy hill-tops,
Calling to their mates beneath,
As they chased the timid field-fare,
Or the hare, across the heath?

Here, where Nature, wan and frenzied,
Flashes round us all the day,
And the very springs of motion
Help to cause their own decay;

When the frame is slack and nerveless
From the poison of the air,
And the soul can scarce remember
That the works of God are fair;

Soon the mental vision, wearied,
Learns to see His wrath at hand,
And a red destroyer angel
Dealing death about the land;

Every plague a dispensation,
  Every thunder-clap a knell;
Miserable life but fostered
  For procrastinating hell.

While death strikes our bosom's dearest,
  While he takes our ancient foes,
Soul and body, worn and wildered,
  Sink into a grim repose.

Happier far an English peasant,
  With a true young-hearted wife;
With a master not despotic,
  And the needful props of life;

And the knowledge of a Maker,
  Merciful as well as just,
Who would not have given burthens
  Greater than its strength, to dust;

Who would not have sent His darling
  In disgrace and pain to die,
If He had not many mansions,
  Differing exceedingly.

Ah ! methinks a film of blindness
Hinders seeing when we would,
In His sight how little differ
Very bad and very good.

In the good is much of evil,
In the bad are germs of good ;
Man may not prepare the furnace,
Nor condemn the sapless wood.

I have seen the old, proud-hearted,
Withering in a web of creeds,
Self-appointed saints condemning
Other men's unfathomed deeds ;

I have seen the young and gallant
Die before the frosts begin,
Full of true and tender yearnings,
Mid the common curse of sin.

If they stood by human judgment,
Any one that loved could tell
One would much embitter heaven,
And the other sweeten hell.

O, let each, though sorely straitened,
Strive to hope and do the best;
Hope to enter, weary wanderer,
Into everlasting rest.

VI.

THE BURDEN OF THE WILDERNESS.

WHEN rounded wastes of barren sand
Torment the exile's eye,
And, howling o'er the thirsty land,
Tempestuous fire-blasts fly;
When nature gleams with anger-beams
On drooping herb and tree,
My breast is fain to breathe again
The freshness of the Sea.

Late in the night, when sinks the breeze,
I turn in feverish sleep,
And seem to hear, in rustling trees,
The murmur of the deep;

Thick falls the heat, the transient cheat
No solace brings to me—
Mine ears are fain to hear again
The voices of the Sea.

Unnumbered dimples of the calm
The billows give to God,
To Him goes up the awful psalm,
When tempests are abroad:
The ocean's Lord my soul adored
On childhood's bended knee—
O, I am fain to share again
The worship of the Sea.

VII.

THE world grows old, her beauty fadeth fast—
More and more frequent cross her mind
The bodings of her doom;
Two hundred generations all have passed,
We only now remain behind,
And populate their tomb.

On every face appears
The trace of recent tears,
Save where the laugh of madness rattles by,
Or idiotcy's idle eye
Glances from earth to heaven in vacant gloom.

THE WANDERER.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE throng of earth's slow struggles
seek not here,
Nor pomp, nor circumstance, nor
moving tale;
But whatsoever of that angelic scale,
Whose feet are earth-set, whose tops touch the sphere,
By its own splendours may be rendered clear,
Shall show one soul, whether she rise or fail:
Faith's sympathetic vision will prevail
To see more true things than to sense appear.
The soul sees with the eye as through a glass,
And, if God wills, without it; be it not said,
" This," or " that is," or " is not;" shadows pass
Before us: O! how soon we may be made
To own the temporary things we see
A mere penumbra of eternity!

I.

PROEM.

A BARREN heath, with bitter east-winds piping,
A garden full of sunshine and of bees,
A village school, a wandering home, a boyhood
Perplexed and various, shot with sin and shame,
A hot and wayward youth, led by false lights
To sloughs and bogs of danger and contempt,
A vague uneasiness, and ignorance—
For knowledge opens but to one key, Love,
The which I partly sought, but found it not—
Such were the earlier hours of life's drear night.

II.

A VOICE.

OFT in the dumb hour that precedes the dawn,
Before the cock crows to the waning stars,
When men sleep soundest, and the world is still,

A voice of strangest import came to me—
A welcome, but an awful voice. It came
From hills and green lanes, woods and dewy lawns;
It breathed of innocent pleasures, now not known,
Or known, not loved; of feverish regret
For things perchance but little valued then,
Now lost for aye, and bitter to the heart:
It was a moaning and a warning voice—
A moan for Eden lost, a boding vague
Of coldness coming on, as if it said,
" God's spirit will not always strive with flesh."

III.

THE PATH.

EAST fade the fields, yet not so fast as fade
The memories of childhood; fades from me
The misty distance of the Hampshire fields:
England is lost already to my heart,
And half the bitterness of death is past.

The moon has made a path upon the waves
Which will be mine to-morrow—toward the East:
The land that bred me cannot nourish me,
And I go forth. I will not mourn the chance.

IV.

SETTING OUT.

WE parted in the sunshine and the crowd,
The inquisitive gaze of noon; the busy hum
Of men about the port, with strangers by,
And cold convention, with her tyrant forms,
Removed the solace, and drove home the sting.
We should have sundered on a lonely shore,
Where slowly broadened o'er a misty sea
The shimmer of a large low-lying moon;
My vessel should have loomed against the night,
Nor shown impatience but by one flapped sail;
And in that hour we should have known a noise
Of water crawling gently up the stones,
And falling softly back with silver sound.

Such noise I hear not now, though tones of night
There are, which, in unquestioned diapason,
Accompany the murmurs of my soul.
By daylight, nature jarred with jangling keys,
But now, all mingles well—the sounds are sad,
And I am sad to find myself alone.
So, standing hand in hand upon the beach,
We should have parted; you gone back—ah me!—
To your sweet home, to muse upon the past;
I, to my destiny beyond the sea,
With a heart touched, not torn beyond a cure.

V.

THE SAME.

MUSE upon your lingering words of love
In search of any comfort, as a child
Might play with desperate hand on his own hurt.
As, " May the Eldorado that of old
Haunted your lonely visions, and your speech,
Be found a truth by you!" Or thus, " Alas!

I cannot hope that you shall be exempt
From the common lot;" or, " There is but one land
Whereto we send our dearest in all hope,
And doubt not that to follow them were bliss."
And in a bygone letter, " A poet's heart
Is in your breast, though little uttered yet.
When the sun leaves the earth at eventide,
His glory-beams, which shone alike on all,
Leave but the higher hills: slowly withdrawn,
They linger long upon the peaks, till night
Wraps all alike in irrespective darkness;
And on the spirit of man there dwell at first
Beams of his native heaven, and deck the child.
None but the higher natures keep those rays
Till death brings night to all;" and, " O love Truth,
But never deck her statuary limbs
With the presumptuous garb of paradox."
Ah me! not even your partial words can cheer
My burthened soul to-night—hark! the ship's bell
Marks the beginning of another day,
The day on which I sail! Whate'er I do,
Where'er I go, the world turns round the same,
And the great universe's pulses beat,
And He alone who is the Governor

And Centre of the circle of all spheres,
Knows what I am, or heeds; and when I die,
The stars will shine, and the whole globe turn round,
And the great universe's pulses beat,
And He alone will heed.
So runs the world—
You there, I here, God only everywhere.

VI.

THE HYPHEN.

AM weary of the ocean, emblem of eternity:
Boundlessness is too ideal — time and space suffice to me.
Life at sea is but the shadow of the life we led on land,
And the weary glass of Chronos hardly seems to drop a sand.
Life at sea is life suspended in a Present evermore,
All the Past is dim behind us, all the Future vague before.

'Tis an isthmus leading on from continent to continent,
Where the spirit, worn with waiting, sometimes dreams it is content.
For I dream, cast out from action, nothing more remains to do,
Gazing at the sky and ocean, looking up from blue to blue—
Watching in night's constellations circles of the wheeling mast,
Nourishing a moody fancy with the visions of the Past;
Or if visions of the Future sometimes dimly glide between,
'Tis when memory shapes the To be, by reversing what has been—
That which was was dark and gloomy, clouds of doubt and storms of sin,
Till I thought "Perchance the outer lends its shade to that within;
But the country which is coming is the home of warmth and light,
And the soul may spread her pinions there more beautifully bright."

Still I erred—I know that change of climate is not
change of soul—
Every ship has care for cargo, wheresoe'er the billows
roll,
Where storms toss, or calms entrance her, from the
line to either pole.
Let what will be, there is nothing wherewithal I may
not cope.
Thus I sing between the lands of disappointment
and of hope:
Thus I sing; the night wind freshens ever; let it
blow a gale,
Fill the canvas, strain the rigging; still our destined
course we sail.

VII.

Ἀγνώστῳ Θεῷ.

H, sought of old on misty mountain-tops,
And by the well-heads of long reverenced
streams—
Places in which the cool air lapped men so,

And the all-coloured wavings of the trees,
And the soft, dark-blue distance, and the stir
Of black and white upon the ancient stems,
That they forgot their individual heats,
Merging them in the universal—sought
In frozen caves beneath the purple lights!
THEE, not the sounds of timbrel or of yell
In tropic palm-groves, lone among the waves,
Displease. THOU dost not shun the narrow faith
That sees thee in misshapen human forms,
Wrought by artificers from firewood trunk;
Nor dost THOU hide THEE from the larger pomp
Of stole and alb, and censer-swinging lads,
And aged men who pray in alien tongues;
And fluted swell of organ, when the vaults
Reverberate the clamour, and the heavens
Blush through the tinted oriel, and all else,
Sight, sound, and deed, be sensuous and of earth.
And THOU art found by those, austere and hot,
Who sunder from their brethren, and devote
A simple and unsumptuous rite to THEE,
In open field or tabernacle stern.
With each and all I will believe THOU art,
Because with each the shrine is still the same,

The matchless temple, made without hands—man.
Life without THEE is life inanimate;
And better far false gods than none at all;
Yet, with them, is it but a fevered sleep
With vague and unintelligible dreams.
Come THOU to me all lonely: Lo! my heart
Is empty, swept, and garnished, and I bring
There, to thine altar-foot, my wingèd thoughts,
My hornèd resolutions, fruits and flowers—
Worthless, unless thy beams have quickened them:
Lo! what I have I sacrifice to THEE.

VIII.

AD SODALES.

THE stars are clear in heaven, and all the slopes
Are slumbering in the silence of the night:
I hear a distant noise of waterfalls;
Far to the northward the great hills of snow
Thrust up their moon-kissed pinnacles; deep peace

Is on the happy world—the peace of God.
The peace of God! When comes there such to me?
Yet life has changes: brothers, we know that,
Even from the bygone lustre; did we dream—
When first, amid the glimmer of the moon,
And the unnumbered laughings of the sea,
We launched our little vessel, five years past—
Dream of the voyage before us? Ah! since then
How many barks, as full of hope as ours,
And tended by as favourable winds,
Have perished from our knowledge;—some gone down
To darkness, bearing to the last the hues
And beams of their destruction; some—ah worse—
Still drift among the breakers of despair,
Without a compass, mastless, floating wrecks.
While, thanks to God—for surely He is here—
Our path is still upon serener waves,
Our rigging stout, our needle pointing true,
And our eyes fixed upon the polar star.

IX.

RESIGNATION.

AND is it true? Can such sweet dreams not lie?
O pure Egeria of a crownless lord!
Not by cool waterfall and mossy grot,
Beneath the mild light of a temperate sun,
With nature for a temple, do we meet;
But, as we parted, in a busy town,
Among the selfish throng of commerce; here—
Where vulgar schemers buy a chance of fortune
With sacrifice of all—we meet again;
And I, who was the worst and least of those,
Learned life's sweet lesson from thy lips of love,
Young alchemist, whose heaven-directed search
Has found the great Magistrum, oft denied
To wise men and to prophets of the world.
"Thou didst not think to teach me." What of that?
Feeling is more than knowledge, work than words.
The lesson much I needed, and do still:
My life is not as I would—a dull round

Of trivial cares, and sordid, worldly aims,
Intrench'd by poverty, and sunder'd far
From all my spirit values. I, God wot!
To toil long years in this distempered clime,
Cut off from art and sweet delight of life;
When, in the converse of congenial hearts,
A glorious work had crowned my sinking head.
It was a dream; yet who is there can say,
" I have awakened, and will dream no more?"
Yet here is work, too, though the end be far;
And here, even in exile, is a home—
For some short years a home; while yet I see
The roses not all withered on your cheek,
Our little ones still round their mother's knee,
The sunshine of a hearth, though mostly cold,
And love, that waits on virtue—here is home.

X.

PEACE.

CALL not our mission exile; who shall dare
To carp at independence, or to rail
Because his fate suffers him not to share
The nippings and the throngings of the mart,
The wrestlings of our overcrowded home—
That other far-off home beyond the seas?
Oh, 'tis the poor man's paradise to know
That day succeeding day shall still provide
Its never-failing sustenance for those
His heart is knit to; and to feel that heart,
Unchecked by old convention, freely beat,
And thrill with generous thoughts that link mankind,
And worship its own God, nor be coerced
Hither and thither with prescriptions hard,
And oft-resolved tenacious usages,
That, loosened, cling again at every turn
In that maternal isle.
Oh, proudly swell,

Thou breast of every free man—proudly rise,
Thou voice—for none shall check thine utterance;
And though thy hearers may seem few to thee,
Know that the after-time may warm thy words,
Till some of them shall ripen into deeds:
Know this in faith, and it shall be to thee
For an abiding sense of deathlessness.

And yet one would not die here; none can be
Without some vision of a cottage home,
Or in the pastures of the fields, or where
The tide of civilized life is eddying round
Some quiet nook, where men of thought repose,
Nursing the labours of their younger brains,
In great, imperial London.

Mine should be
Some rural spot, whence I could see afar
The cloud that rests for ever over her,
And the black towers of that minster old,
Where kings and poets (kings of their own souls),
Sown by the sedulous hand of Goodman Death,
Await the harvest-time HE will not see.
And I would have the immemorial Thames
To sparkle through my tall, surrounding trees;
And I would have the village-church hard by,

That I might see the undulating green,
Where I, and some of those I loved, should rest.
Ah, foolish heart! that it should better thee
To know that when thy flutterings shall have stilled—
The first repose that they shall ever know—
Thou shouldst rot here or there: the time shall come
(Ay, and is now) when thoughts like these shall be
Less vivid, less important than the dreams
Of long-forgotten slumbers; than the thoughts
Of prememorial childhood—almost less
Than the faint echoes of a former birth;
And thou, O heart! shall be like one of these,
Or as thou hadst been never—Peace, O Peace!

THE TOMB OF THE SUTTEE.

COME forth, my fairest! from your sheltered glade
Of thick-grown mangoes, where the white tents stand
Half hid, half seen, beneath the chequered shade;
Come with me while day lingers, hand in hand,
Among the meadows of the glimmering land.
A flood of fire surrounds the sun's decline,
The hills throw long grey shadows on the plain;
Far off, the bells upon the necks of kine
Make silver jangling from the creaking wain,
And pass away, and all is still again.
Shouts to his fellows now the housing hind,
The startled partridge whirrs his homeward flight,
The rocks and trees grow less and less defined,
Fainter and fainter every sound and sight,
And scarce the highest points retain the light.

Here, where the latest beams of day are thrown,
Gaze on this ruined pile, and name its name—
A weed-grown doorway, and a heap of stone,
And here a minaret standing, still the same;
And here the mortar dyed with hues of flame.
Bright as of old the broken painting glows,
As if the beautiful survived the strong—
The Peepul bursts the masonry, and throws
Against the sky its frantic arms so long,
In all the petulance of vulgar wrong.
This place, where ruin mars the work of love,
Was made a monument in years gone by,
Of one with more than manhood's might who strove,
And conquered death by learning how to die,
And, silent, gave a ribald world the lie.
In such an hour as this, without a veil—
Sorrow's devotion is not earthly, proud—
Here came, with features resolutely pale,
A youthful widow, 'midst a jostling crowd
Of self-applauding saints and minstrels loud,
And loveless friends exulting in her part
As though it were their own. Oh! who can say

What thoughts have struggled in her beating heart
Through the long hours of that lone, weary day—
What griefs, what hopes, what fears to pass away!
E'en now one shudder as she mounts the pile:
The struggle passes; with a calm delight
She takes his head upon her breast—her smile
Is hid by flames that, odorous and bright,
Rise canopied with smoke.
We gaze to-night
Upon her tomb, I and my fair-haired wife;
She—not unequal, should love bid her dare—
As home we turn, asks, "Does not duteous life
Make truer martyrdom, and sight more fair
For men and angels, than one blank hour of despair?"

INDIAN DOMESTIC IDYLL.

AS on her faithful Edward's breast Emilia's head reclined,
He gazed on her with tenderness, while fear came o'er his mind;
For he thought her perfect features showed a presage of decay;
And "Oh, the lady of my love," he said, "she fades away!
The sun of this wild land is bright, but deadly is his glare,
And poison loads the gales and rains of all the livelong year.
My labours, too, are fameless here—all joyless every feast—
My soul is sick for freedom from this weary, weary East.
O for the breeze so pure though chill, the sun, though weak, so kind,

A crust of bread from day to day, with health of
frame and mind,
And the voices of our children never absent from
our hearth,
And gladness in the garden-plots, where bees and
birds make mirth—
And in the end the old churchyard, with two green
mounds of earth."
" Ah! not from you," the lady said, and her timid
eyelash fell;
" Oh! not from you those false weak words my
own heart knows so well;
We were not born for happiness in this stern world
of toil,
Nor are we of the forest growth whose souls are in
the soil:
Whatever land we start from, dear, the goal is still
the same,
And he who steers for duty's light must never
think of fame.
Our fates are but our motives, and (if this is any
balm)
Think if an age of pleasure can be worth an hour
of calm,

Of deep and settled peace, with which, before the day is done,
And the weary march is ended, we may watch the setting sun;—
So if duty be a burthen, 'twill be lighter borne by two,
And if you will struggle on, love, I will struggle here with you."
He kissed her ample brow, as sweet peace came o'er his breast,
And let not any seek to know (I cannot tell) the rest—
If he lived to share with her he loved a few bright years at least,
Or one, or both, have left their bones to moulder in the East;
Or whether they enjoyed, or not, what worldly men call bliss,
'Twere vain to ask, and vain to tell, the moral is not this.

CLIVE'S DREAM BEFORE THE BATTLE OF PLASSY.

"The majority (of the council) pronounced against fighting, and Clive declared his concurrence with the majority. . . . But scarcely had the meeting broken up than he was himself again. He retired alone under the shade of some trees, and passed near an hour there in thought. He came back determined to put everything to the hazard, and gave orders that all should be in readiness for passing the river on the morrow."—MACAULAY.

BENEATH the thick old mango-trees the boughs are growing black;
The night-hawk screams a bolder note, and wheels a wider track;
Far to the right, all ghostly white, thick tents are dimly seen;
Barbaric music faintly wails, the river runs between;
All blood-red on the western verge the skirts of twilight lie,
And Io's pale horns from the east go slowly up the sky.

Who walks at such an hour in the strange garb of the Frank,
And flings himself in gloomy guise on yonder grassy bank;
And mutters thus—" 'Twere madness, sure, with such a force as ours,
To bide the brunt while yet the Moor unbroken holds his powers,
In hope to gain Morshedabad or Patna's distant towers?"
Sore labours has that leader proved, but toil has worn him less
Than cares which weighed, and nigh dismayed, his soul with their distress.
For stronger is the chief to do, than steady to endure,
And till to-day the swift with him has ever been the sure.
But now is come a direr strait than e'er the little band
Have known since first their venturous feet have trod this foreign strand;
The blood-stained rake, the tiger-prince, that laid their city low,

And slew their best and bravest by a cold-blood coward's blow,—
He marches now with all his force, and boasts, in drunken glee,
To drive the pale-faced traders down before him to the sea;
And well may those stout strangers rest content his speed to stay,
Or trust to wait till cools his hate, or his armies melt away.

Now sinks the din from either camp, and not a sound is heard
Except the roar of hungry beast, or scream of prowling bird;
And CLIVE still lies extended; but no more he mutters now,
For sleep has sealed his weary eyes, and soothed his aching brow.
'Tis strange and sad to see that man of action in repose;
As sleeps the child, or mother mild, to outward sense he shows:

To sense he shows; but who can say if all be peace
within,
Or if the frame's mute trance allow full scope to
wrath and sin?
Ha! mark you not that clenching hand, that wild
convulsive start;
And who but deems that angry dreams are surging
at his heart?
The body sleeps, the spirit wakes; and in the un-
known land
She visits then, she does what he could never un-
derstand.
Her jailer dull, he chains her down; but when his
care grows slack,
Her flight she takes till he awakes, and quickly
calls her back;
But what would it avail to tell of where her path
has been?
He could not understand her speech, or see what
she has seen.
Sleep, warrior, sleep, the GOD of battles will have
work for thee,
And well though thou canst toil at need, yet rested
must thou be;

For, violent and bad, thou art JEHOVAH'S servant still,
And e'en to thee a dream may be the angel of HIS will.

What changing clouds, what wreathing shapes float through that slumberer's breast!
What voices of vague augury, rejoicing or distrest!
While underneath and over all the tissue is of gore,
The crimson coat, the meteor flag, the hue of England's war,
The tiger-prince flies fast away, the foe shout in his rear,
The echo falls on Delhi's walls, and rocky Jessulmere;
The wild Mahratta hosts are broke, the proud Rohilla yields;
High kings are bending on their thrones, and peasants in their fields.

See WELLESLEY learn his deathless flight, see beams of glory take

The comely head of COMBERMERE, the gallant
crest of LAKE,
The bayonet-push, the sabre-charge, through every
realm of Ind,
From far Nepal to Cabul's heights and parks of
sunny Sindh;
The red flood creeps from east to west, as goes the
mighty sun,
To where in disappointment turned the hosts of
Macedon;
From Martaban, from Comorin, to where Hydaspes
flows,
Or holy Himalaya hoards her immemorial
snows.
Sunlike it creeps; a flood of light, with blessings
in its train;
The darkened land, the barren land, shall ne'er be
so again.
O Western light! O light of blood! O hue of
England's war!
He starts to life with a sudden bound, to speak of
peace no more.
" Ho! call the chiefs; ho! bid the men to gather
on the lawn,

Prepare the boats—in silence all—we cross before
the dawn."
But those who heard the welcome word, still won-
dered that he said—
" Perplexed, I ween, my rest has been, but GOD
is for the Red."

THE FLOWERS' REVENGE.

FROM THE GERMAN OF FREILIGRATH.

N the soft cushions of a couch of down
Slumbers the maid, imprisoned in
repose;
Close droop her eyelashes, profuse and brown;
Her cheek is tinted like a full-blown rose.

Hard by there shimmers in the smothered light
A vase of choicest ornament and mould;
And in the vase are fresh-cut flowers, and bright,
Fragrant to smell, and various to behold.

Damp are the heats that, broodingly and dull,
Flow and flow on throughout the chamber small;
Summer has scared away the tender cool,
Yet fastened stand the casements one and all.

Stillness around, and deepest silence lowers;
Suddenly, hark! a whisper as of CHANGE;
Heard in the tender stems, heard in the flowers,
It lisps and nestles eagerly and strange.

Swing from the cups that tremble on those stems
The little spirits, the embodied scents,
Some bearing shields, some topped with diadems,
Delicate mists their robes and ornaments.

From the flushed bosom of the queenly Rose
Arises gracefully a slender Lady,
Pearls glisten in her hair, that freely flows
As dewdrops glisten where the copse is shady.

Forth from the visor of the Helmet plant
A keen-faced Knight steps 'mid the dark-green leaves,
His presence breathing high chivalric vaunt;
Complete in steel he shines from crest to greaves;

Over his morion, nodding waywardly,
Hangs heron plumage, grey, and silver pale.
Leaving the Lily, with sick, languid eye,
A wood-nymph, thin as gossamer her veil.

Out of the Turk-cap comes a swarthy Moor,
Wearing his flaunting robes with scornful show;
On his green turban glitters, fixed before,
The golden radiance of the crescent bow.

Forth from the Crown-imperial, bold and tall,
Sceptre in hand, appears an ermined King;
From the blue Iris, girt with falchions all,
His hunters troop, green-vested like the spring.

Suddenly swirling down from the Narciss,
A youthful form, with silent sorrow laden,
Steps to the bed, to print his fevered kiss
Upon the red lips of the sleeping maiden.

The other spirits, crowding, press and swing
All round the couch in many circles gay;
They swing and press themselves, and softly sing
Over the sleeper their mysterious lay:—

" Maiden, O cruel maiden! thou hast torn
Up from the earth our every slender tie,
And, in this gaudy-coloured shard forlorn,
Left us to weaken, wither, fade, and die.

" Alas! how happy once was our repose
On the maternal bosom of the earth,
Where, through the tall tree-tops that o'er us rose,
The sun made vistas to behold our mirth!

" The balmy spring, with many a gentle breeze,
Cooled our weak stems that to his bidding bent;
At eve descending under the still trees
How blissful was our fairy merriment!

" Clear on us then fell Heaven's own dew and rain,
Foul water now surrounds us stagnantly;
We fade, and we shall die—but not in vain,
If, ere we pass, our vengeance lights on thee."

The spirits' song is hushed, their errand told;
Bending, around the sleeper's couch they go;
And, with the brooding silences of old,
Returns again the whispering, soft and slow.

Hark! how the rustling rises round the wreath!
How glow her cheeks, instinctive of their doom!
See how upon her all the spirits breathe—
How the scents undulate throughout the room!

The slanted sparkles of the westering day
Smiting the room, each spirit vanisheth;
Upon the cushions of the couch she lay—
As beautiful, and ah! as cold as death.

One faded blossom, lying all alone,
Lends to her cheek a tender tint of red,
With her wan sisters sleeps that hapless one—
Oh! fatal breath of flowers!—the maid is dead.

THE CRADLE.

FROM BÉRANGER.

BEHOLD, dear friends, this pinnace light and frail
Timidly tempt the waves of life's rough sea,
The little passenger is young to sail
Alone—his earliest mariners be we.
Already have the waters made it float,
Calmly it shall preserve its life-long way,
If we, who watch the launching of the boat,
Seek, by our songs, to make its passage gay.

Already Fate has filled its canvass light,
Already Hope her brightest aspect wears,
And promises, beneath a starlit night,
Calm seas for ever, soft and fragrant airs.

Away, away, birds of ill-omened note,
Love is the captain of our crew to-day,
Let us, who watch the launching of the boat,
Seek, by our songs, to make its passage gay.

They hang their garlands on the blessed mast,
And share the toils, Dione's love-led band;
We have made offering to the Sisters chaste,
And Friendship has the tiller in his hand;
Bacchus himself shall cheer us while afloat,
Invoking pleasure with a jocund lay,
Let us, who watch the launching of the boat,
Seek, by our songs, to make its passage gay.

Who is it comes to bid the vessel hail?
'Tis Disappointment, she makes Virtue blest,
And trusts that sacrifices may avail
To give this infant happiness, or rest;
While our prayers' echo dies on rocks remote,
Sure that the gods give ear, to whom we pray,
Let us, who see the launching of the boat,
Aid, by our songs, to make its passage gay.

THE PARTITION OF THE EARTH.

FROM SCHILLER.

AKE hence the world," Zeus, from his lofty station,
Proclaimed to man, " take; it is your's in fee,
" Henceforth to you I yield its occupation,
" Divide it only brotherly."

Then might you see each sharing at his pleasure,
And settling in their places young and old;
The farmer takes the fields with all their treasure,
The mounted noble sweeps the wold.

The merchant counts his generative riches;
The abbot stipulates for choice of wine,
The king blockades the highways and the bridges,
And saith, " Because the toll is mine."

Long time after this sharing had been ended
The poet came from some remotest land;

O'er all the world his anxious gaze he bended,
But all things owned some master's hand.

" Ah me," he cried, " must I in desolation,
" Alone be left, thy most devoted son?"
Thus loud he dared to lift his lamentation;
And bowed before the Thunderer's throne.

" If in the land of dreams thou must be faring,"
(Calm spoke the God) " there lies no blame in me;"
" Where wert thou, then, when men the earth were sharing?"
Answered the poet, " Lord, with thee.

" Mine eye upon thy majesty was dwelling,
" Upon thy Heaven's harmonies mine ear—
" Forgive the heart that with that rapture swelling
" Let slip the earth he felt too near."

" What shall be done?" said Zeus, " the earth is given,
" The Wood, the Tilth, the Mart, no more are mine;
" Wilt thou for ever dwell with me in Heaven?
" The gate will ope to touch of thine!"

BALLAD.

I.

COLDER then than now it froze,
Though to-day is cold enough;
And I think, as the poor man older grows,
The hide of his back gets tough.
A lady's chariot drove to the George,
She was a maiden, proud and high,
I was a lad with a roving eye,
Standing by the forge.
Cling, clang, clang, cling,
Loudly the anvils ring!

II.

I knew her, and she knew me,
But was dumb,—for her mate was there,—
She was wife that was to be,
He was his lordship's heir.
Never again he rose from the bed
Where he slept by his leman fine:

He laid him down in the pride of wine,
But the morning found him dead.
Clang, cling, cling, clang,
Grimly the anvils rang.

THE BRIDEGROOM.

THE moon yet strives with dawn
Which shall throw a shadow
Through mists that lie all lightly on the lawn,
Heavily on the wide and watery meadow.

Not long: the golden morning
Gains every moment ground;
The dying night-star scorning—
Hark how the birds sing out for joy around.

Creation casts its burthen
On such a holy day;
Shall I not to her then
My full heart's adoration meetly pay?

She who has consented
To be, to-day, my bride,
And has not repented
For any ills that might meantime betide;

Dearer than all creatures
Of sight, or thought, or dream,
Gilds me to-day her features
With the mild lustre of love's languid beam.

While, upon the Evangels,
I pledge to her my faith,
Give ear, all good Angels,
To the true words my passionate spirit saith.

May I ever shield her
From all shade of ill,
Comfort her, and yield her
Love to her love, indulgence to her will.

May no remembered sorrow
Her pure soul annoy,
But to-morrow, and to-morrow
Still give her warmer hope, contentment, peace,
and joy!

HOC ERAT IN VOTIS.

LONG to live
Upon a shaded sloping lawn,
That should in summer mist-wreaths give
Up to the dawn.

There I would listen
To the low laughing of a fount,
Whose drops, that in the sunshine glisten,
Break as they mount.

There I would muse
How empty all things mortal are.
Under the beech-tree, far from yews
That drip despair,

Let me be laid,
When all of me that can shall die:
Where the rose hangs o'er the colonnade,
And the night winds sigh.

THE DAY-SPRING.

A DREAM.

Ex oriente LUX.

AFTER the heat and labour of the day
I journeyed forth alone, my horse's rein
Loose on his shoulder, for the way was short.
It was a broad and cool and shaded road,
Lit by a tremulous glimmer, till the moon
Rose o'er the right-hand plain, with length of shadow.
Deep thickets, tall arecas, and young palms—
The cry of beasts from far, nearer the song
Of naked boatmen on the holy river,
The holy river flowing hard at hand,
And now and then the barbarous clash and shout
Raised to some local Moloch; these, and more
Of unfamiliar sights and sounds, by night

Companioned me along on either side,
And told me sadly of an alien land.
And soon the place and house I sought were gained,
And when I laid me down upon my bed,
The visions of my sleep came fraught with all
That I had seen in journeying from the town;
And in the spirit-world they took a form,
Haply more true to the intuitive sight—
The vision of the soul—than theretofore
Their elements had seemed to the eye of flesh.

I saw two spirits by a river's shore,
Under a palm-tree; one a shape of pride,
And on her bold bright brow a look she wore,
Of hope and high defiance, and beside
The gathered wisdom of a thousand years,
Kindness and courage, doubts she could not hide,
And traces of a few but recent tears.
A darker form, with movements soft and slow,
Crouched at the pale one's feet, and neither slept,
Nor truly woke, and seemed at times as though
She smiled, and yet, in spite of laughter, wept,
And still had no acquaintance with her woe.

And sometimes, with an idly busy hand,
Made images and figures in the sand;
Whereto the other—" The years come and go,
Awake, arise, O daughter of the land!
Thine images are dust, thine eyes are blind,
Or see alone the things they should not see.
Thy knowledge is but iguorance; the wind
Speaks more intelligible things than thou, to me:
Thy men are subject to the strongest hand
That cares to hold them in a brief control;
Thy women scarcely know they have a soul;
Arise, and follow me, O daughter of the land."
Whereto the other, raising her meek head,
That hung before all listless,—" O let be,
I do not slumber, neither am I dead.
What have I done to win such words from thee,
Whose eyes are wet with revel, hot and wild,
Whose knowledge is oppression and despair,
And brings with all its vaunted range of ken,
Fear to the brave, and sadness to the child;
Whose men are lawless, and whose women share
The orgies and the frenzy of the men?
I war not with my fate, which thus has given
The labour of my sons, my fields, to thee,

But many paths may all conduct to heaven;
Take thou thine own, and, ah! leave mine to me."
" Sister!" she made reply, " Your words are vain:
The sun, which rose here on Creation's morning,
Sunk in the west to you, shall yet again
Arise ere long, and put to flight your scorning;
Behold yon line of light upon the horizon."
Whereat I turned, and saw the light bedizen
The cold night with a narrow belt of grey;
And as the swart nymph rose, her forehead caught
the ray.
Amen! my heart sighed—bring, O God, the day.

FINIS.

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